

LETTERS
CONTAINING
A SKETCH
OF THE
POLITICS OF FRANCE,
From the Thirty-first of May 1793, till the
Twenty-eighth of July 1794,
AND
OF THE SCENES WHICH HAVE PASSED IN
THE PRISONS OF PARIS.

4 vols
BY
HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

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LETTERS

CONTAINING

A SKETCH

OF THE

POLITICS OF FRANCE

From the Thirty-first of May 1789 till the

Twenty-first of July 1794

AND

OF THE SCENES WHICH HAVE PASSED IN

THE PALACE OF BASTILLE

BY

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ST. MARTIN'S LANE



LETTER I.

Switzerland, September 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

AFTER so long a suspension of our correspondence, after a silence like that of death, and a separation which for some time past seemed as final as if we had been divided by the limits of "that
" country from whose bourn no traveller returns," with what grateful pleasure did I recognize your hand-writing, with what eagerness did I break the seal of your welcome letter, and with what soothing emotions receive the tidings of

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your

your welfare, and the assurance of your affection ! Your letter was a talisman that served to conjure up a thousand images of sorrows and of joys that are past, and which were obliterated by the turbulent sensations of dismay and horror.

Perhaps it will not be uninteresting to you to receive from me a sketch of the scenes which have passed in Paris since the second of June, an epocha to be for ever deplored by the friends of liberty, which seated a vulgar and sanguinary despot on the ruins of a throne, till the memorable 28th of July 1794, when Liberty, bleeding with a thousand wounds, revived once more. If the picture I send you of those extraordinary events be not well drawn, it is at least marked with the characters of truth, since I have been the witness of the scenes I describe, and have known personally all the principal actors. Those scenes, connected in my mind with all the detail of domestic sorrow, with the feelings



feelings of private sympathy, with the tears of mourning friendship, are impressed upon my memory in characters that are indelible. They rise in sad succession like the shades of Banquo's line, and pass along my shuddering recollection.

After having so long suffered without daring to utter a complaint, it will relieve my oppressed spirits to give you an account of our late situation; and in so doing, I shall feel the same sort of melancholy pleasure as the mariner who paints the horrors of the tempest when he has reached the harbour, and sheds a tender tear over his lost companions who have perished in the wreck——Ah! my dear friend, that overwhelming recollection fills my heart with anguish which only they who have suffered can conceive. Those persons in whose society I most delighted, in whose cultivated minds and enlightened conversation I found the sole com-

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pensation

penfation for what I had loft in leaving my country and my friends—to fee them torn from me for ever, to know the precise moment in which they were dragged to execution ; to feel—but let me turn a while from images of horror which I have confidered but too deeply, and which have caft a fadnefs over my mind that can never, never be difpelled. Whenever they recur, a funereal veil feems to me to be fpread over nature; and neither the confcioufnefs of prefent, nor the affurance of future fafety, neither the charms of fociety, nor all the graces, nor all the wonders of the fcenes I am now contemplating, can difsipate the gloom.

Not long after the reign of Robefpierre began, all paffports to leave the country were refused, and the arreftation of the Englifh refiding in France was decreed by the national convention; but the very next day the decree was repealed on the representations of fome French merchants,

eliants, who shewed its impolicy. We therefore concluded that we had no such measures to fear in future ; and we heard, from what we believed to be good authority, that if any decree passed with respect to the English, it would be that of their being ordered to leave the republic. The political clouds in the mean time gathered thick around the hemisphere : we heard rumours of severity and terror, which seemed like those hollow noises that roll in the dark gulf of the volcano, and portend its dangerous eruptions : but no one could calculate how far the threatened mischief would extend, and how wide a waste of ruin would desolate the land. Already considerable numbers were imprisoned as suspected—*suspected!* that indefinite word, which was tortured into every meaning of injustice and oppression, and became what the French call the *mot de ralliement*, the initiative term of captivity and death.

One evening when Bernardin St. Pierre, the author of the charming little novel of Paul and Virginia, was drinking tea with me, and while I was listening to a description he gave me of a small house which he had lately built in the centre of a beautiful island of the river that flows by Essonne, which he was employed in decorating, and where he meant to realise some of the lovely scenes which his fine imagination has pictured in the Mauritius, I was suddenly called away from this fairy land by the appearance of a friend, who rushed into the room, and with great agitation told us that a decree had just passed in the national convention, ordering all the English in France to be put into arrestation in the space of four-and-twenty hours, and their property to be confiscated. We passed the night without sleep, and the following day in anxiety and perturbation not to be described, expecting every moment the commissaries of

of the revolutionary committee and their guards to put in force the mandates of the convention. As the day advanced, our terror increased : in the evening we received information that most of our English acquaintance were conducted to prison. At length night came ; and no commissaries appearing, we began to flatter ourselves that, being a family of women, it was intended that we should be spared ; for the time was only now arrived when neither sex nor age gave any claim to compassion. Overcome with fatigue and emotion, we went to bed with some faint hopes of exemption from the general calamity of our countrymen. These hopes were however but of short duration. At two in the morning we were awakened by a loud knocking at the gate of the hotel, which we well knew to be the fatal signal of our approaching captivity ; and a few minutes after, the bell of our apartments was rung with violence. My sister and myself hurried

on our clothes and went with trembling steps to the anti-chamber, when we found two commissaries of the revolutionary committee of our section, accompanied by a guard, two of whom were placed at the outer door with their swords drawn, while the rest entered the room. One of these constituted authorities held a paper in his hand, which was a copy of the decree of the convention, and which he offered to read to us; but we declined hearing it, and told him we were ready to obey the law. Seeing us pale and trembling, he and his colleague endeavoured to comfort us; they begged us to compose ourselves; they repeated that our arrestation was only part of a general political measure, and that innocence had nothing to fear.—Alas! innocence was no longer any plea for safety. They took a procès-verbal of our names, ages, the country where we were born, the length of time we had lived in France; and when this register was finished, we were told that

we

we must prepare to depart. We were each of us allowed to take as much clean linen as we could tie up in a handkerchief, and which was all the property that we could now call our own; the rest, in consequence of the decree, being seized by the nation. Sometimes, under the pressure of a great calamity, the most acute sensations are excited by little circumstances which form a part of the whole, and serve in the retrospect of memory, like certain points in a landscape, to call up the surrounding scenery: such is the feeling with which I recall the moments when, having got out of our apartments, we stood upon the stair-case surrounded with guards, while the commissaries placed the seals on our doors. The contrast between the prison where we were going to be led, and that home which was now closed against us, perhaps for years, filled my heart with a pang for which language has no utterance. Some of the

guards were disposed to treat us with rudeness ; which the commissaries sternly repressed, and, ordering them to keep at some distance, made us lean on their arms, for they saw we stood in need of support, in our way to the committee-room. We found this place crowded with commissaries and soldiers, some sleeping, some writing, and others amusing themselves with pleasantries of a revolutionary nature, to which we listened trembling. Every half-hour a guard entered, conducting English prisoners, among whom were no women but ourselves. Here we passed the long night ; and at eight in the morning our countrymen were taken to the prison of the Madelonettes, while we were still detained at the committee. We discovered afterwards that this was owing to the humanity of the commissaries who arrested us, and who sent to the municipality to know if we might not be taken to the Luxembourg, where we should find

find good accommodations, while at the Madelonettes' scarcely a bed could be procured. All that compassion could dictate, all the lenity which it was in the power of these commissaries to display without incurring ten years imprisonment, the penalty annexed to leaving us at liberty, we experienced. Humanity from members of a revolutionary committee! You will perhaps exclaim in the language of the Jews, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" It is certain, however, strange as it may seem, that our two commissaries behaved towards us as if they remembered that we were defenceless women in a land of strangers; that we were accused of no crime but that of being born on the soil of England; and that, if we were punished, we had only deserved it by trusting with too easy a belief in that national faith which was now violated. By the way, when I tell you that we experienced compassion from

revolutionary committees, you will not suppose I mean to assert that compassionate men formed the majority of their committees. The greater part of mankind in all ages, even when accustomed to the most elevated rank, have abused power : how then could it be hoped that unlimited power would not be abused, which was confided to men who were for the most part ignorant and unenlightened ; men who, till that period confined to their shops and their manual occupations, were suddenly transported into splendid hotels, with authority to unlock cabinets blazing with jewels, to seize upon heaps of uncounted gold, and with a stroke of their pens to disperse as many warrants for imprisonment, as caprice, envy, or mistaken zeal might prompt ; who were made arbiters of the liberty, property, and even lives of their fellow-citizens ; and who were incited, nay even compelled, to acts of violence under the penalty of being
4 branded.

branded with the guilt of *moderantism*? When such was the new-established system, when it required the most daring courage to be humane, and when to be cruel was to be safe, can you wonder, that among the revolutionary committees in general there was not "as much pity to be found as would fill the eye of a wren?" After passing the whole day, as we had done the night, in the committee-room, orders arrived from the municipality to send us to the former palace, now the prison of the Luxembourg, where we were attended by two guards within each coach, while two walked on each side. What strange sensations I felt as I passed through the streets of Paris, and ascended the steps of the Luxembourg, a sad spectacle to the crowd! We were conducted to the range of apartments above the former rooms of state, where we were received with the utmost civility by the keeper of the prison, Benoit, a name which many a wretch has.

has blessed, for many a sorrow his compassion and gentleness have softened. His heart was indeed but ill suited to his office; and often he incurred the displeasure of those savages by whom he was employed, and who wished their victims to feel the full extent of their calamity, unmitigated by any detail of kindness, any attention to those little wants which this benevolent person was anxious to remove, or those few comforts which he had the power to bestow. The barbarians thought it not enough to load their victims with iron, unless "it entered into their souls." But Benoit was not to be intimidated into cruelty. Without deviating from his duty, he pursued his steady course of humanity; and may the grateful benedictions of the unhappy have ascended for him to heaven!

We had a good apartment allotted us, which a few weeks before had been inhabited by Valazé, one of the deputies of the

the convention, who was now transferred to the prison of the Conciergerie. Our apartment, with several adjoining, had soon after the event of the 31st of May been prepared for the imprisonment of the deputies of the *colé droit*; and for that purpose the windows, which commanded a fine view of the Luxembourg-gardens, had been blocked up to the upper panes, which were barred with iron. Mattraffes were provided for us in this gloomy chamber, the door of which was locked by one of our jailors; and we had suffered too much fatigue of body, as well as disturbance of mind, not to find a refuge from sorrow in some hours of profound sleep.

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LETTER II.

THE next morning the sun rose with unusual brightness; and with the aid of a table on which I mounted, I saw through our grated windows the beautiful gardens of the Luxembourg. Its tall majestic trees had not yet lost their foliage; and though they were fallen, like our fortunes, “into the fear, the yellow leaf,” they still presented those rich gradations of colouring which belong to autumn. The sun gilded the gothic spires of the surrounding convents, which lifted up their tall points above the venerable groves; while on the back-ground of the scenery arose the hills of Meudon. It seemed to me as if the declining season had shed its last interesting graces over the landscape to sooth my afflicted spirit; and

and such was the effect it produced. It is scarcely possible to contemplate the beauties of nature without that enthusiastic pleasure which swells into devotion; and when such dispositions are excited in the mind, resignation to sufferings, which in the sacred words of scripture "are but for a moment," becomes a less difficult duty.

The Luxembourg had lately been fitted up to receive the crowd of new inhabitants, with which it was going to be peopled, and every apartment obtained a particular appellation, which was inscribed on the outside of the door. We were lodged in the chamber of Cincinnatus: Brutus, I think, was our next-door neighbour; and Socrates had pitched his tent at the distance of a few paces. The chamber of *Indivisibility* was allotted to some persons accused of *federalism*, and *Liberty* was written in broad characters over the door of a prisoner who was *au secret*.

secret *. With respect to great names, it has been observed in Paris, that almost all the illustrious characters of Greece and Rome have been led to the guillotine—for instance, Brutus, who often, while we were in prison, came from the municipality with orders from Anaxagoras, was soon after doomed to an equal fate,

“ Alike in fortune, as alike in fame !”

together with Anacharsis, Agricola, Aristides, Phocion, Sempronius Gracchus, Epaminondas, Cato the elder and the younger, and many other no less celebrated worthies, who fell in sad succession under the sword of Maximilian †.

Our prison was filled with a multitude of persons of different conditions, characters, opinions and countries, and

* In close confinement.

† The christian name of Robespierre.

seemed

seemed an epitome of the whole world. The mornings were devoted to business, and passed in little occupations, of which the prisoners sometimes complained, but for which perhaps they had reason to be thankful, since less leisure was left them to brood over their misfortunes. Every one had an appointed task : in each chamber the prisoners, by turns, lighted the fires, swept the rooms, arranged the beds; and those who could not afford to have dinner from a tavern, or, as the rich were yet permitted, from their own houses, prepared themselves their meals. Every chamber formed a society subject to certain regulations : a new president was chosen every day, or every week, who enforced its laws and maintained good order. In some chambers no person was allowed to sing after ten, in others, after eleven at night. This restriction would, perhaps, have been superfluous in England in a similar situation.

tion ; but it was highly necessary here, since it prevented such of the prisoners as were more light-hearted than the rest from singing all night long, to the annoyance of others of their neighbours, who might think the music which resounded through the prison during the day fully sufficient. The system of equality, whatever opposition it met with in the world, was in its full extent practised in the prison. United by the strong tie of common calamity, the prisoners considered themselves as bound to soften the general evil by mutual kind offices ; and strangers meeting in such circumstances soon became friends. The poor lived not upon the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, but shared the comforts of the repast ; and here was found a community of the small stock of goods, which belonged to the whole without the necessity of a requisition. One broom, which

which was the property of a countess, was used by twenty delicate hands to sweep the respective apartments; and a tea-kettle with which a friend furnished my mother was literally, as Dr. Johnson observed of his own, never allowed time to cool," but was employed from morning till night in furnishing the English with tea.

In the afternoon the prisoners met in an anti-chamber, which commanded a view of the gardens. Here they formed themselves into groups: some conversed, others walked up and down the room; others gazed from the windows on the walks below, where, perhaps, they recognized a relation or a friend, who, being denied the privilege of visiting the prison, had come to sooth them by a look or tear of sympathy. During the first days of our confinement, the prisoners were permitted to see their friends; and many a striking contrast of gaiety
and

and sorrow did the anti-chamber then exhibit. In one part of the room, lively young people were amusing their visitors by a thousand little pleasantries on their own situation; in another, a husband who was a prisoner was taking leave of his wife who had come to see him, and shedding tears over his child who was clinging to his knees, or had thrown its arms around his neck and refused to be torn from its father. As the number of prisoners increased, which they did so rapidly, that in less than a week they were augmented from an hundred to a thousand, the rules of the prison became more severe, and the administrators of the police gave strict orders, that no person whatever should be admitted. After this period the wives of some of the prisoners came regularly every day, bringing their children with them to the terrace of the gardens. You often saw the mother weeping, and the children stretch-

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ing out their little hands and pointing to their fathers, who stood with their eyes fixed upon the objects of their affection : but sometimes a surly sentinel repressed these melancholy effusions of tenderness, by calling to the persons in the walk to keep off, and make no signs to the prisoners.—In the mean time, among the crowd that filled the public room were fine gentlemen and fine ladies, who had held the highest rank at court, some flirting together, others making appointments for card parties or music in their own apartments in the evening, and others relating to us in pathetic language all they had suffered, and all they had lost by the revolution. It was impossible not to sympathize in the distresses of some, or avoid wondering at the folly of others, in whom the strong sense of danger could not overcome the feelings of vanity; and who, although the tremendous decree had just gone forth, making

“ terror

“terror the order of the day,” and knowing that the fatal pre-eminence of rank was the surest passport to the guillotine, could not resist using the proscribed nomenclature of “Madame la duchesse,” “Monsieur le comte,” &c. which seemed to issue from their lips like natural melodies to which the ear has long been accustomed, and which the voice involuntarily repeats. There were, however, among the captive nobility many persons who had too much good sense not to observe a different conduct, who had proved themselves real friends to liberty, had made important sacrifices in its cause, and who had been led to prison by revolutionary committees on pretences the most trivial, and sometimes from mistakes the most ludicrous.. Such was the fate of the former count and countess of ———, who had distinguished themselves from the beginning of the revolution by the ardour
of

of their patriotism and the largeness of their civic donations. They had hitherto lived undisturbed in their splendid hotel, and there they might probably have continued to live a little longer, had not the countess, in an evil hour, sent down to her chateau a fine marble hearth, which, by some accident was broken on the way. The steward sent a letter, in which, among other things, he mentioned that the "foyer* must be repaired at Paris." The letter was intercepted and read by the revolutionary committee. They swore, they raged at the dark designs of aristocracy. "Here," said they, "is a daring plot indeed! a *foyer* of counter-revolution, and to be repaired at Paris! We must instantly seize the authors and the accomplices." In vain the countess related the story of the

* *Foyer* is the French name for hearth, and also for the central point of a system.

hearth, and asserted that no conspiracy lurked beneath the marble: both herself and her husband were conducted to the maison d'arrêt of their section, from which we saw them arrive at the Luxembourg with about sixty other persons at the hour of midnight, after having been led through the streets in procession by the light of an immense number of flambeaux, and guarded by a whole battalion. These prisoners had at least the consolation of finding themselves in the society of many of their friends and acquaintances, for all the polite part of the fauxbourg St. Germain might be said to be assembled at the Luxembourg in mass. Imprisonment here was, however, no longer the exclusive distinction of former nobility, but was extended to great numbers of the former third estate. We had priests, physicians, merchants, shop-keepers, actors and actresses, French valets and

English waiting-women, all assembled together in the public room; but in the private apartments Benoit's benevolent heart taught him the most delicate species of politeness, by placing those persons together who were most likely to find satisfaction in each other's society.

Amidst many an eloquent tale of chateaux levelled with the ground, and palaces where, to borrow an image of desolation from Ossian, "the fox might be seen looking out at the window," we sometimes heard the complaints of simple sorrow unallied to greatness; but, like the notes of the starling, "so true in time to nature were they chanted," that they seized irresistibly on the heart. Of this kind was a scene which passed sometimes between a poor English woman and her dog, which she had brought to keep her company in her captivity. She had been housekeeper in a French family, and, some months before she was imprisoned,

had sent her daughter, who was her only child, to her friends in England. The poor woman often exclaimed, while her face was bathed in tears, " Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte, I shall never see you again ! " Whenever the dog heard the name of Charlotte, he began to howl in so melancholy a note, that it was impossible not to sympathise in his lamentation.

The most frightful circumstance which attended our arrestation were the visits of Henriot, the commandant of the military force of Paris. This wretch had been one of the executioners on the second of September, and was appointed by the commune of Paris on the 31st of May to take the command of the national guard, to point the cannon against the convention, to violate the representation of the people, and to act the prelude of that dark drama of which France has been the desolated scene, and Europe the affrighted spectator. Henriot performed

formed his part so much to the satisfaction of his employers, that he was continued in his command; and it was a part of his office to visit the prisons, and take care that they were properly guarded. The first time I saw him was the day after our confinement. He entered on a sudden our apartment, brandishing his sword, and accompanied by twelve of his officers. There was something in his look which did not give you simply the idea of the ferocity which is sometimes to be found among civilized Europeans: his fierceness seemed to be of that kind which belongs to a cannibal of New Zealand; and he looked not merely as if he longed to plunge his sabre in our bosoms, but to drink a libation of our blood. He poured forth a volley of oaths and imprecations, called out to know how many guillotines must be erected for the English, and did not leave our chamber till one person who

was present had fainted with terror. In this manner he visited every apartment, spreading consternation and dismay; and these visits were repeated three or four times in a week. Whenever the trampling of his horse's feet was heard in the court-yard, the first prisoner who distinguished the well-known sound gave the alarm, and in one moment the public room was cleared; every person flying with the precipitation of fear to his own apartment. Every noise was instantly hushed; a stillness like that of death pervaded the whole dwelling; and we remained crouching in our cells, like the Greeks in the cave of Polyphemus, till the monster disappeared. The visits of the administrators of police, though not so terrific as those of Henriot, were nothing less than soothing. Brutality, as well as terror, was the order of the day; and those public functionaries, whose business it was not only to see that the po-
lice

fice of the prison was well regulated, but
 also to hear if the prisoners had any sub-
 ject of complaint, used to make the en-
 quiry in a tone of such ferocity, that,
 whatever oppressions might hang on the
 heart, the lips lost the power of giving
 them utterance. The visits of the po-
 lice generally produced some additional
 rigour to our confinement; and in a short
 time all access to us whatever was for-
 bidden except by letters, which were sent
 open, and delivered to us after being ex-
 amined by the sentinels. There was
 sometimes room for deep meditation on
 the strange caprice and vicissitudes of
 fortune. We found the ex-minister Ame-
 lot a prisoner in the Luxembourg; he,
 who during his administration had distri-
 buted lettres de cachet with so much
 liberality. Tyranny had now changed
 its instruments, and he was become him-
 self the victim of despotism with new

inignia : the *blue ribband* had given place to the *red cap*, and “ de par le roi ” was transformed into “ par mesure de sûreté générale.” By his order La Tude, whose history is so well known, had been confined thirty years in the Bastille. He was now enjoying the sweets of liberty ; and, before the prison-doors were shut against strangers, came frequently to visit some of his friends in the very room where the minister was imprisoned.

Amelot, in a comfortable apartment and surrounded by society, did not bear his confinement with the same firmness as La Tude had borne the solitude of his dungeon, cheered only by the plaintive sounds of his flute of reeds. He was in a short time bereft of his reason ; and, among the wanderings of his imagination, used to address letters to all the kings of Europe and all the emigrant princes, inviting them to sumptuous repasts,

pasts, to which he sometimes proposed admitting the national convention, to shew that he was above bearing malice.

Whenever any new prisoners arrived, the rest crowded around them, and hastened to calm their minds by the most soothing expressions of sympathy. Not such were the emotions excited by the appearance of Maillard, who was one of the murderers on the second of September, and who had lately been appointed to a command in the revolutionary army; from which, for some malversations, he was now dismissed, sent to prison, and ordered into close confinement. He had taken a very active part in the late transactions, and had, a few days before his own arrest, conducted to prison two fine boys, who were the sons of the ex-minister La Tour du Pin, together with their governor, who was a priest. They were stepping into a carriage, which was to convey them to school, when they were seized upon

by Maillard, who taking the youngest, a child of eleven years of age, by the shoulder, said to him in a stern accent, “ Il faut dire la vérité, toute la vérité, et rien que la vérité*.” No sooner was Maillard brought into the anti-chamber, while his room was preparing, than the little boy recognized his acquaintance, and running up to him cried, “ Bonjour, citoyen Maillard—il faut dire la vérité, toute la vérité, et rien que la vérité.”

Nothing could be more painful than the sensations excited by reading the evening papers, which the prisoners were at this time permitted to receive, and which were expected with that trembling anxiety with which, under present evils, we long to look into the promises of futurity. The evening paper seemed to

* You must speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

us the book of our destiny ; but there we could trace no soothing characters of hope, or mercy. Every line was stamped with conspiracy, vengeance, desolation, and death ; and the reading the events of the day left impressions on our minds which often deprived us of sleep. We sometimes quitted the crowd in the public room, and, shutting ourselves up in our own apartment, endeavoured, amidst the evils of this world, like Sterne's monk, to look beyond it. If such meditation was calculated to wipe away our tears, it sometimes made them flow—" Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee : according to the greatness of Thy power, preserve Thou those that are appointed to die !"

LETTER III.

THE days of my captivity are often brought back to my remembrance, by circumstances which seem sufficiently remote from sorrows; by that connexion of the past with the present, which Aken-side describes so beautifully*: and you will perhaps think that my imagination is somewhat disordered, when I tell you that the lake, from the luxuriant banks of which I send you this letter, recalls to my mind our apartment in the prison. The walls of that apartment were hung with tapestry which described a landscape of romantic beauty. On that landscape I often gazed till I almost persuaded myself that the scenery was alive around me,

* Pleasures of Imagination, book iii.

so much did I delight in the pleasing
 illusion. How often, while my eyes were
 fixed on that canvas which led my wound-
 ed spirit from the cruelty of man to the
 benignity of God—how often did I wish
 “for the wings of a dove, that I might
 flee away and be at rest!” To be seated
 at the foot of those sheltering hills which
 embosomed some mimic habitations, or
 beneath a mighty elm which rose ma-
 jestically in the fore-ground of the piece,
 and spread its thick foliage over a green
 slope, appeared to me the summit of
 earthly felicity. Those hills, the torrent-
 stream which rolled down their steep
 sides, the shady elm, and all the objects on
 the tapestry, are indelibly impressed on my
 memory; and often when I am wander-
 ing through the charming scenes of Swit-
 zerland, a country which nature seems
 to have created more for ornament than
 use, where she has spread over every
 landscape those lavish graces which in
 other

other regions belong only to a few favoured spots, I have felt my eyes bathed in tears, while, amidst views of overwhelming greatness, some minute object unobserved by others has led my imagination to the tapestry and the prison. A few days since I passed along the falls of the Tessino, rolling through narrow cliffs under rocks of the most terrific form, in a succession of torrents, sweeping after each other down the abrupt descent, and broken in their course by enormous fragments torn from the cliffs; sometimes raising their scattered surges into thin air, and sometimes displaying the prismatic colours on the foam. While I was standing on one of those daring bridges that are thrown across the gulph, and that tradition calls the work of supernatural agency, after the first transport of admiration, in which the mind loses all traces of the past, or thought of the future, had subsided, the torrent-rill which
rushed

rushed down the Luxembourg tapestry presented itself to my memory, while amidst the pendent groves of pine and fir, bending along the cliffs, and above the sweeping birch which dipped its drooping branches in the surf, I discovered a towering elm, the form of which resembled the friend of my captivity—But how far have I escaped from my prison!—You will forgive this digression: my mind is full of those scenes of beauty and grandeur which have calmed my troubled spirit, and in which I have found a renovation of existence.

I have yet only given you a general outline of our prison; but there was one scene of calamity which myself and my family were alone doomed to witness, and of which our fellow captives had no share. Our apartment, with two others adjoining, was separated from the public room by a little passage, and a door which the huissiers carefully locked at night. It happened

happened that these apartments were then occupied by two persons in whose society we had passed some of the most agreeable hours of our residence in France. These persons were Sillery and La Source, two of the members of the convention, who had been long in close confinement, and who were now on the point of appearing before that sanguinary tribunal whence, after the most shocking mockery of justice, they were inhumanly dragged to the scaffold. Sillery, on account of his infirmities, had with much difficulty obtained permission from the police for his servant to be admitted into the prison during the day, together with an old female friend, who, on the plea of his illness, had implored leave to attend him as his nurse, with that eloquence which belongs to affliction, and which sometimes even the most hardened hearts are unable to resist. While men assume over our sex so many claims to superiority, let them

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at least bestow on us the palm of constancy, and allow that in the fidelity of our attachments we have the right of pre-eminence. Those prisons from which men shrunk back with terror, and where they often left their friends abandoned lest they should be involved in their fate—women, in whom the force of sensibility overcame the fears of female weakness, demanded and sometimes obtained permission to visit, in defiance of all the dangers that surrounded their gloomy walls. Sillery's friend and his servant being allowed to go in and out of his apartment, the door was not kept constantly locked, although he and La Source were closely confined, and not permitted to have any communication with the other prisoners. The second night of our abode in the Luxembourg, when the prisoners had retired to their respective chambers, and the keeper had locked the outer door which enclosed our three apartments, La Source entered our
 room.

room. Oh ! how different was this interview from those meetings of social enjoyment that were embellished by the charms of his conversation, always distinguished by a flow of eloquence, and animated by that enthusiastic fervour which peculiarly belonged to his character ! La Source was a native of Languedoc, and united with very superior talents, that vivid warmth of imagination for which the southern provinces of France have been renowned since the period when, awakened by the genial influence of those luxuriant regions, the song of the Troubadours burst from the gloom of gothic barbarism. Liberty in the soul of La Source was less a principle than a passion ; for his bosom beat high with philanthropy, and in his former situation as a protestant minister he had felt in a peculiar manner the oppression of the antient system. His sensibility was acute, and his detestation of the crimes by which the revolution had been

been sullied, was in proportion to his devoted attachment to its cause. La Source was polite and amiable in his manners : he had a taste for music, and a powerful voice ; and sung, as he conversed, with all the energy of feeling. After the day had passed in the fatigue of public debates, he was glad to lay aside the tumult of politics in the evening, for the conversation of some literary men whom he met occasionally at our tea-table. Ah, how little did we then foresee the horrors of that period when we should meet him in the gloom of a prison, a proscribed victim, with whom this melancholy interview was beset with danger !

We were obliged to converse in whispers, while we kept watch successively at the outer door, that if any step approached he might instantly fly to his chamber. He had much to ask, having been three months a close prisoner, and knowing little of what was passing in the world ;

world; and though he seemed to forget all the horrors of his situation in the consolation he derived from these moments of confidential conversation, yet he frequently lamented, that this last gleam of pleasure which was shed over his existence was purchased at the price of our captivity. In the solitude of his prison, no voice of friendship, no accents of pity had reached his ear; and after our arrival, he used through the lonely day to count the hours till the prison-gates were closed, till all was still within its walls, and no sound was heard without, except at intervals the hoarse cry of the sentinels, when he hastened to our apartment. The discovery of these visits would indeed have exposed us to the most fatal consequences: but our sympathy prevailed over our fears; nor could we, whatever might be the event, refuse our devoted friend this last melancholy satisfaction. La Source at his second visit was accompanied

accompanied by Sillery, the husband of Madame de Sillery whose writings are so well known in England. Sillery was about sixty years of age; had lived freely, like most men of his former rank in France; and from this dissipated life had more the appearance of age than belonged to his years. His manners retained the elegance, by which that class was distinguished which Mr. Burke has denominated "the Corinthian capital of polished society." Sillery had a fine taste for drawing, and during his confinement displayed the powers of his pencil by tracing beautiful landscapes. He also amused himself by reading history; and, possessing considerable talents for literature, had recorded with a rich warmth of colouring the events of the revolution, in which he had been a distinguished actor, and of which he had treasured up details precious for history. With keen regret he told me that he had committed several

several volumes of manuscript to the flames, a sad sacrifice to the Omars of the day.

The mind of Sillery was somewhat less fortified against his approaching fate than that of La Source. The old man often turned back on the past and wept, and sometimes enquired with an anxious look, if we believed there was any chance of his deliverance. Alas! I have no words to paint the sensations of those moments!—To know that the days of our fellow captives were numbered—that they were doomed to perish—that the bloody tribunal before which they were going to appear, was but the path-way to the scaffold—to have the painful task of stifling our feelings, while we endeavoured to sooth the weakness of humanity by hopes which we knew were fallacious, was a species of misery almost insupportable. There were moments indeed, when the task became too painful to be endured.

dured. There were moments when, shocked by some new incident of terror, this cruel restraint gave way to uncontrollable emotion ; when the tears, the sobbings of convulsive anguish would no longer be suppressed, and our unfortunate friends were obliged to give instead of receiving consolation.

They had in their calamity that support which is of all others the most effectual under misfortune. Religion was in La Source a habit of the mind. "Im-pressed with the most sublime ideas of the Supreme Being, although the ways of heaven never appeared more dark and intricate than in this triumph of guilt over innocence, he reposed with unbounded confidence in that Providence in whose hand are the issues of life and death. Sillery, who had a feeling heart, found devotion the most soothing refuge of affliction. He and La Source composed together a little hymn adapted to a sweet solemn air, which they called
their

their evening service. Every night before we parted they sung this simple dirge in a low tone to prevent their being heard in the other apartments, which made it seem more plaintive. Those mournful sounds, the knell of my departing friends, yet thrill upon my heart !

I.

Calmez nos allarmes,
Pretez nous les armes,
Source de vrais biens,
Brisez nos liens !

Entende les accens

De tes enfans

Dans les tourmens ;

Ils souffrent, et leurs larmes

C'est leur seul encens !

II.

Prenez notre défense,

Grand Dieu de l'innocence !

Près de toi toujours

Elle trouve son secours ;

Tu connais nos cœurs,

Et les auteurs

De nos malheurs ;

D'un fort qui t'offense

Détrui la rigueur.

III.

III.

Quand la tyrannie
 Frappe notre vie,
 Fiers de notre fort,
 Méprisant la mort,
 Nous te bénissons,
 Nous triomphons,
 Et nous savons
 Qu'un jour la patrie
 Vengera nos noms !

THE TRANSLATION.

I.

Calm all the tumults that invade
 Our souls, and lend thy pow'rful aid,
 Oh! Source of mercy! sooth our pains,
 And break, Oh! break our cruel chains!
 To thee the captive pours his cry,
 To thee the mourner loves to fly:
 The incense of our tears receive,
 'Tis all the incense we can give.

II.

Eternal Pow'r, our cause defend,
 Oh God! of innocence the friend!
 Near thee for ever she resides,
 In thee for ever she confides.
 Thou know'st the secrets of the breast,
 Thou know'st th' oppressor and th' oppressed:

Do thou our wrongs with pity see,
Avert a doom offending thee!

III.

But should the murderer's arm prevail,
Should tyranny our lives assail,
Unmov'd, triumphant, scorning death,
We 'll bless thee with our latest breath.
The hour, the glorious hour will come
That consecrates the patriot's tomb;
And with the pang our memory claims,
Our country will avenge our names!

La Source often spoke of his wife with tender regret. He had been married only a week, when he was chosen a member of the legislative assembly, and was obliged to hasten to Paris, while his wife remained in Languedoc to take care of an aged mother. When the legislative assembly was dissolved, La Source was immediately elected a member of the national convention, and could find no interval in which to visit his native spot, or his wife, whom he saw

no more. In his meditations on the chain of political events, he mentioned one little incident which seemed to hang on his mind with a sort of superstitious feeling. A few days after the 10th of August he dined in the fauxbourg of St. Antoine with several members of the legislative assembly, who were the most distinguished for their talents and patriotism. They were exulting in the birth of the new republic, and the glorious part they were to act as its founders, when a citizen of the fauxbourg, who had been invited to partake of the repast, observed, that he feared a different destiny awaited them. "As you have been the founders of the republic," said he, "you will also be its victims. In a short time you will be obliged to impose restraints and duties on the people, to whom your enemies and theirs will represent you as having overthrown regal power only to establish your own. You will be accused

of aristocracy ; and I foresee," he added with much perturbation, "that you will all perish on the scaffold." The company smiled at his singular prediction : but during the ensuing winter, when the storm was gathering over the political horizon, La Source recalled the prophecy, and sometimes reminded Vergniaud of the man of the fauxbourg St. Antoine. Vergniaud had little heeded the augur ; but a few days previous to the 31st of May, when the convention was for the first time besieged, La Source said again to Vergniaud, " Well, what think you of the prophet of the fauxbourg ?" " The prophet of the fauxbourg," answered Vergniaud, " was in the right."

The morning now arrived when La Source and Sillery, together with nineteen other members of the convention, were led before the revolutionary tribunal. When the guards who were to conduct them

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arrived,

arrived, the other prisoners crowded to the public room to see them pass, and we shut ourselves up in our own apartment. They returned about five in the evening; soon after which their counsel arrived, and we had no opportunity of seeing them till midnight, when they related to us what had passed. The conduct of the judges and the aspect of the jury were calculated to banish every gleam of hope from the bosoms of the prisoners; the former permitted with reluctance any thing to be urged in their defence, and the latter listened with impatience, casting upon their victims looks of atrocity in which they might easily read their fate: yet in spite of these unhappy omens our friends returned from the tribunal with their minds much elevated. La Source described in his eloquent language the noble enthusiasm of liberty, the ardent love of their country, the heroical contempt of death which animated his

colleagues, whom he had not seen for some time, since they had been transferred to the Conciergerie, while himself and Sil-lery had obtained permission to remain at the Luxembourg upon the certificates of their physicians, that they were too ill to be removed without danger. La Source declared that ancient history offered no model of public virtue beyond that which was exhibited by his friends at the tribunal, and who in their prison, blending with the fortitude of Romans the gaiety of Frenchmen, and being confined in one apartment, passed the short interval of life which was left in conversation, and cheerful repasts which were usually concluded with patriotic songs. "You," said Vergniaud to La Source when they met at the tribunal, "you perhaps will find something to regret in the loss of life. You have a glimpse of the gardens of the Luxembourg, which may remind you that there
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is something beautiful in nature : but we who live in human shambles, who every day see fresh victims dragged to execution, we are become so familiarized with death, that we look on it with unconcern."

A few days before this sanguinary trial ended, the administration of the police sent orders that the English-women confined in the Luxembourg should be removed the next day to a convent in the fauxbourg St. Antoine. With what keen regret La Source and Sillery received this intelligence ! A thousand and a thousand times they thanked us for the dangers we had risked in receiving them, and for the sympathy which had soothed the last hours of their existence—a thousand times they declared, that if it were yet possible their lives might be preserved, they should consider themselves for ever bound to us by the most sacred ties of gratitude and friendship : but they

felt, alas ! how small was the chance that we should meet again in this world. Sillery cut off a lock of his white hairs, which he begged I would preserve for his sake, and La Source gave me the same relic. They embraced us with much emotion. They prayed that the blessing of God might be upon us : we mingled our tears together, and parted to meet no more !—

Let me, before I conduct you to our new prison, give you a short account of the political events and their causes, which, after bringing those members of the convention to the scaffold who were most fitted by their talents to defend liberty, and by their moral qualities to make it beloved, ended in such a system of cruelty and crimes, that it can be only by a long perseverance in public virtue that France can make reparation to humanity, or retrieve her character among the nations.

LET-

LETTER IV.

THE republican party of the legislative assembly had, it is well known, very early projected many alterations in the new constitution. They had observed with great inquietude the changes which had taken place at the close of the first national assembly, when its labours underwent a revision previously to the acceptance of the constitution by the executive power, and when they found that those who had hitherto been the most strenuous opponents of the court suddenly became its most zealous advocates and friends.

Though this party formed the minority of the legislative assembly, its influence by means of the popular societies was very extensive. But when the struggle took place between the court and the republi-

can party, both of which were at length agreed in the overthrow of the new constitution, with which each was for different reasons equally dissatisfied, the party was joined by many who in this destruction of the regal authority had no other end in view than the establishment of their own.

The society of the Jacobins, which had been for a long time the rival and at length the conqueror of the throne, was deserted immediately after the victory by almost all those who had contributed to gain it. They imagined that every domestic enemy was annihilated when the first decree of the convention changed the monarchy into a republic ; and though symptoms of discontent discovered themselves among some who thought that the change had been too hastily decided on, and symptoms of a more dangerous and fatal tendency to the welfare of the government had already appeared among others, yet those to whom the people had given

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their confidence were not sufficiently aware of the instability of popular favour, and the precarious tenure by which they held it. The commune of Paris claimed an equal right to share with the Jacobins the honours of the triumph over royalty; but dissatisfied with the little credit given to the services it had rendered during the struggle, it took advantage of the imbecility of the legislative assembly then expiring, and had already erected itself into a rival power before the convention had opened its first debates. The pretence of making extraordinary exertions to oppose the march of the enemy towards Paris had led the commune, amidst a multiplicity of other acts of rebellion, to arrogate the functions of the representatives of the people; and having at the fatal period of the massacre of September humbled the legislative assembly to the dust, they thought that the same daring conduct would give them the same superiority

riority over the national convention. But in this calculation they were deceived. Robespierre and his adherents, who had hitherto directed their counsels, now aspired to higher destinies ; and, though solicitous to make the commune an auxiliary in their designs, were unwilling that it should become their rival. In the new election of representatives, all those were excluded who had been influenced by the court, or who had opposed from purer motives the republican party. Although this party gained a considerable reinforcement by the new election, yet the dread of returning royalty, with all the severity of the old system, had operated so powerfully on the minds of the people of the departments, that many deputies were chosen whose pretensions to this trust arose more from the strength of their lungs than of their talents, and whose harangues made up in noise what they wanted in argument ; while the still
greater

greater dread of the return of those horrors which the commune had just been exercising had so intimidated the citizens of Paris, that a part of their deputation to the convention, at the head of which was Robespierre, triumphing over the fears they had excited, took their seats rather as the conquerors than the representatives of the people. The conduct of the officers of the municipality, however, called aloud for punishment. It was impossible for the convention to suffer the crimes they had committed, and the still greater atrocities which they had meditated, to pass unnoticed. The council-general of the commune were called to the bar, but escaped justice by dissembled professions of repentance, and the promise of delivering up those who had led them to the commission of such enormities. Had the convention, while its rival was thus subdued, proceeded to distinguish between those who had been the chiefs of the conspiracy

spiracy and those who had been the dupes
 of their imposture, they would have done
 a great act of national justice, and would
 have crushed any further attempts against
 the national honour. But as this humili-
 ation of the commune was a contrivance
 to escape examination, of which the con-
 spirators who directed its operations, and
 who had been chosen since to the con-
 vention, were afraid; the assembly, de-
 ceived by this artifice, had no sooner
 granted the pardon they implored, than
 the faction, emboldened by impunity;
 perceived that with audacity and perse-
 verance they might yet attain the end to
 which they aspired. While Robespierre
 sat in the commune, his object was pro-
 bably to frame a government of municipi-
 palities, of which Paris was to be the chief,
 and himself the dictator: but this enter-
 prise being encompassed with difficul-
 ty, since the people had determined to
 have a national convention, he afterwards
 changed

changed his measures, and began to meditate a plan of making the convention itself, of which he was now a member, serve as the instrument of his usurpation.

With this view, he and his disorganizing faction in the convention assumed the direction of the municipality; and as the society of the Jacobins was deserted by the republicans, who thought its services no longer necessary, the name and the place were seized on by the conspirators, and filled with intriguing and ambitious men, whose hopes of sharing in the plunder or the power induced them to become accomplices in the guilt.

While the municipality laboured to win over the sections of Paris, the Jacobins made proselytes to their system of anarchy by their affiliations and correspondence in the departments; and before the existing government was fully aware of the extent of the conspiracy, or could
collect

collect sufficient energy to counteract it, the faction had gained a most alarming ascendancy ; and although they formed a very small minority in the convention, their influence both in the executive part of the government and amongst the constituted authorities was sufficient to outweigh that of the representation itself. Every concession made to the conspirators served only to increase the insolence of their demands ; and although the most eloquent members of the convention, Guadet, Vergniaud, Pethion, Louvet, Brissot and La Source gave incessant warnings of the progress of the anarchists towards the dissolution of all order in the state, yet, like Cassandra, they were believed only when the prophecies were fulfilled *.

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* “ Yes,” says La Source, “ there exists a faction, which seeks to crush the convention and raise the dictatorship on its ruins. This is the faction which has issued its arbitrary mandates, which has ordered
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However criminal this band of conspirators, who have exercised a despotism more hideous than history has ever presented, may appear, or whatever be the

the arrest of eight of my colleagues who sat in the legislative assembly, which has paid robbers to plunder and assassins to murder, and which has had the audacity to lay to the charge of the people the crimes which itself has perpetrated. Were I in going from this place to fall under the poniards of these traitors, I should die satisfied in having lifted up the veil which conceals them: a little longer and I will unmask them altogether." Guadet often detailed the conspiracy of the Jacobins and the municipality, and, with bursts of honest indignation against these shameless traitors, implored the convention to save the republic by dissolving the society and re-electing the commune. Vergniaud with more than usual eloquence portrayed the conspirators. Louvet gave a clear and admirable detail of their attempts to assassinate the convention in the conspiracy of the 10th of March; and Brissot unveiled their treason, not only in the convention and in his journal, but in different publications, of which his address to his constituents published in May 1793 will furnish interesting matter for history.

regrets

regrets we feel for those virtuous friends of liberty who fell the victims of their rage, the historian, more impartial than the friend, will not fail to animadvert on the negligence of which in some instances they were guilty, and above all in carelessly throwing aside, by the desertion of the Jacobin society, the means which they had obtained of informing the public mind and directing its will.

But before we carry our censures too far, we must recollect that they had to contend against men hardened in crimes and inaccessible to shame, who found refuge from the detection of their guilt in the protection of their party, and who returned the thunder of the patriots in the convention by their noisy vociferations at the Jacobins and the commune.

The first attempt made on the national representation by the commune of Paris and the Jacobins, ought to have been punished as an act of rebellion against the
sovereignty

sovereignty of the people. But an ill-judged application of the principles of individual liberty, a too delicate regard for the rights of persons, led on the majority of the convention to the permission of offences, of which they took no measures to stop the progress, till the conspiracy had acquired such strength as made every exertion against it ineffectual.

The treason of Dumourier had furnished the faction with new resources for calumny against the republican party, with some of whom he had formerly been connected : for, as the faction was in the constant habit of denouncing indiscriminately every agent of the republic, the completion of one prophecy gave an air of credit to the rest *. Although the conspirators

* The conspirators accused the republicans of being accomplices in Dumourier's treason : the republicans have retorted the charge on some of their adversaries with the most unquestionable evidence.

But

spirators had acquired considerable influence from the assistance given them by the commune and the Jacobins, they perceived that the object which they had in view, would never fully be attained till they had gained so absolute a control over the convention, as to make it, like the ancient parliaments, the registerers of their imperial edicts. To this end all their efforts were directed: but while those men still sat within its walls whose virtue and eloquence had hitherto warded off the blow which menaced their country, there was little hope of success. The prize set before these traitors was too great

But we need not here recur to conspiracies either of Jacobins or Girondists to discern the motives of Dumourier's conduct. He has endeavoured to explain it himself in his memoirs; to which if any credit ought to be given, the Girondists will be absolved from all share in his treason. But their innocence in this respect, as well as their political integrity in every other, is now established beyond the reach of calumny and detraction.

to suffer them to hesitate about the means of seizing it ; and having thrown aside all regard to the laws, all respect for individual or political liberty, they conceived the project of violating the national representation itself, and tearing from it the most eloquent and intrepid defenders of its rights. To carry their plot into execution, it was necessary to cover it with the veil of the wish of the people, of whom a few hired desperadoes and other ignorant and seduced persons became the representatives, bearing petitions written by the conspirators themselves, praying the convention to drive from their seats a certain number whom they marked as unworthy of their confidence or that of the nation. The indignation of the convention being roused at these attempts, they instituted a commission of enquiry to search into the causes of this conspiracy. This commission, in pursuance of the powers it had received,

received, after mature examination, arrested Hebert, one of the municipal chiefs, and gave notice to the convention that they were prepared to make their report. The conspirators, seeing that their crimes were on the point of being brought to light, the discovery of which would annihilate their project, threw off the mask, and brought forward the commune of Paris to demand not only the dismissal of the commission which the convention had created, but the arrestation of the members who composed it, together with the twenty-two deputies of the convention the most eminent for their virtue and talents. The convention for several days withstood every effort that was made to shake its firmness. The president Isnard, with all the warmth of honest indignation, threatened in the name of the republic the liberticide factioners of the commune, that if they dared to proceed to the execution of those designs which

which their present measures indicated, if the national representation should be violated by any of those conspiracies of which they had been the accomplices, that Paris should be blotted out from the rest of its cities, and that the traveller should wander on the banks of the Seine enquiring where it once stood.

The chiefs of the conspiracy had proceeded too far to be stopped in their career by such considerations as these; but they found more intrepidity and firmness in the convention than they expected, and therefore determined to employ their last expedient. The ringing of the tocsin and the firing of alarm guns had excited the attention of the citizens of Paris for two days, when on the third the beating to arms informed them that they were going to be put into insurrection. The national guard being thus put into insurrection, the cause of which was unknown, the whole body were conducted

ducted to the hall of the convention, where Henriot the commander of the military force, who had been created by the conspirators for that purpose, had ordered them to assemble. The convention was surrounded till nearly midnight by the military force, nor was any member permitted to leave the hall; but, although besieged, the assembly was not yet conquered. The day passed in the most frightful tumult, and Rabaut de St. Etienne in vain stood at the tribune, holding in his hand the report of the commission of twelve upon the conspiracy of the commune, together with the proofs of its authenticity. His voice was lost in the horrible vociferations of the tribunes, and the murmurs of the faction within the hall. At length, finding all his efforts ineffectual, he left the assembly in despair.

The assault of the convention on the 31st of May, though it had produced
the

the most horrible disorder, had not forced from the assembly the decree of arrestation. But Robespierre with his commune, his Jacobins, and his body guard of revolutionary women, who were in the van of the attack, and stood in the passages of the convention armed with poniards, which they pointed at the bosoms of such of the deputies as attempted to leave the hall, had gone too far to recede. The first of June they employed in preparations for a fresh attack; and on the second again the tocsin rung, again the whole city was under arms, and the convention was again invested by sixty thousand men.

It does not appear that all the adherents of the conspirators, or rather the different factions in league with them, were acquainted with all the means which Robespierre, Marat, and the municipality, the original authors of the plot, meant to employ. La Croix, a

member of the mountain, who had been repulsed in endeavouring to go out of the hall, protested with vehemence against this violation of their liberties; and when Henriot, in receiving orders from the president to draw off his troops, replied, that as soon as he had executed the orders of the people he would obey those of the convention, and threatened that if they refused to deliver up to justice the twenty-two deputies whom he called traitors, he would order the cannon to be fired on the hall; Danton with great indignation imprecated vengeance on the head of the ruffian, which some months after, at the period of his own fall, was in the act of accusation alleged against him as a crime. In vain did the convention, partaking Danton's indignation, hope to obtain their liberty by decreeing that the officers of the post next the entrance of the hall should be called to the bar. Two of them had received

no orders, and a third informed them that he was himself consigned by a few strangers who did not appear to him acquainted even with military forms. These strangers were ordered to the bar; but they refused to attend: and thus this assembly, which talked of nothing less than bringing princes and kings in chains to their feet, were made prisoners in their very sanctuary by a few hirelings, of whom no other description was given than that they were strangers and wore mustaches. This was an indignity not to be borne. The president, therefore, proposed that the assembly in a body should go out of the hall: this was decreed, and the sentinels seeing themselves likely to be overpowered gave way. The deputies paraded in the garden, expecting every moment to be massacred; but the conspirators who directed their motions led them back again to the hall, observing, that the convention, after so striking a proof,

could have no doubt of their being at liberty.

Previously to this mock parade, Barrere, who had been weighing the probabilities of success on either side, and examining which party would have the ascendancy, at length invited the proscribed deputies, for the sake of peace and for the good of the state, to submit, and devote themselves to their country. To this admonition three of them acceded; but Barbaroux asserted, that he had no right to give in his dimission, nor could he obey any other mandate than that of the people, who having invested him with the power had alone the right to take it from him. With more vehemence Lanjuinais exclaimed, that he would remain at his post to his latest breath, or till he was torn from it by force. His intrepidity provoked the conspirators to rage and tumult. "Citizens," said he, "we have beheld in
barbarous

barbarous countries the people leading human victims to the altar, after crowning them with flowers; but we never heard, that the priests who were about to sacrifice them treated them with insult. I repeat, that I have no right to lay aside the august character with which the people have honoured me; therefore, expect from me neither self-dimission, nor voluntary suspension for a moment." This courageous reply to their fury appalled the tyrants; and had Vergniaud, Rabaut, Brissot, and others whose names were in the conspirators' list, been then at their post, had they seconded their proscribed colleagues at this critical moment with the thunder of their eloquence, the project of the conspirators might easily have been defeated, and they might have saved both themselves and the republic. While the conspirators were perpetrating this abominable deed, they were deliberating in the house of Guadet

about the means that should be taken to avoid it, and deceived by a report which a friend unhappily ill-informed conveyed to them, that the blood of their colleagues was flowing; and believing it to be too late to make any farther struggle, they suffered the decree of arrestation to be carried without opposition*.

Had

* Louvet relates the following singular anecdote: "We began to breathe again, when a man of Bourdeaux, who had been made prisoner at the battle of Nerwinden, and afterwards exchanged, related to Guadet, his friend, that having had an opportunity of forming an intimate acquaintance with one of the officers of the imperial army, he had learned from him that Cobourg's staff-officers flattered themselves that in a short space of time *twenty-two heads* would fall in the convention. Guadet related to me this anecdote, with which we amused ourselves; but judge of our surprise, and the reflections to which it gave rise, when some time after M. Pache came at the head of the pretended sections of Paris, to present the famous petition which proscribed twenty-two deputies.

"It

Had the convention, when Henriôt sent them his mandate, ordered him to

“ It is important to observe, that this first list of proscription having been composed of *twenty-two* members, the second list, brought some weeks after to the convention by the municipal officers and administrators of Paris, was still *twenty-two*, though all the names were not the same. At the time when the decree of accusation passed, Marat made some changes by his own sovereign authority. He took away some names, that of Lanthenas for example, but he took care to replace them by others, and mark well, in equal number, so that the proscribed were always *twenty-two*. Lastly, when after the taking of Lyons the trial of the republican deputies came on, Pethion, Buzot, Guadet, Salles, Valady, Barbaroux, and myself, were not in their hands. The list might consequently have been reduced a third; nevertheless it was still complete, and the victims led to the scaffold were, if not *twenty-two*, at least *twenty-one*. This strange identity of numbers, at four different periods, gave reason to presume that the number of *twenty-two* heads, and always the same number, was what the *mountain* agreed to furnish according to one of its private articles in its treaty with the coalesced powers.”

he instantly put to death, their orders, if they could have been promulgated out of the precincts of the hall, would undoubtedly have been obeyed; but the conspirators had taken measures to prevent any such transmission, by consigning every officer to his post, by filling up every avenue with their agents, who had received orders to suffer no communication between the hall and the court or garden, and also by closing the gates of the latter, so that the people in general knew nothing of what was passing.

With many others I saw parts of the execution of this conspiracy. I saw the armed force surrounding the hall, but was ignorant, like the rest, of what was passing within. I beheld from a window that overlooked the Tuilleries the convention in full procession; but I could not account for this singular parade, nor was it till midnight that I learned the history of the day, which
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some of the deputies related to us; among whom was Barrere, who with eyes full of tears lamented to us the fate of his friends, and the total ruin of the republic—that Barrere who a few months after provoked and gloried in their murder!

Liberty, however, did not see her principles and rights abandoned with impunity, but has been terribly avenged. From that fatal decree may be dated all the horrors which have cast their sanguinary cloud over the glories of the revolution, which have given strength to despots and arguments to slaves. The national convention has beheld its members dragged in successive multitudes to the scaffold. The Parisian guard, who submitted to become the passive instruments of this atrocious faction; the citizens of Paris, who bent their necks tamely to the yoke; the departments, who, when they afterwards accepted the constitution, had

the baseness to make no conditions for their imprisoned representatives; have seen their fellow-citizens, their friends, their relations, led to death, their property violated, all social ties shaken, virtue every where depressed, vice every where triumphant, and their country one wide scene of calamity, of which the long page of history presents no similar picture, even in the proscriptions of Sylla or the caprices of Caligula*.

Immediately

* Louvet, in his interesting note, says: " On the 20th of May another plot was to have been executed against the republicans of the convention. Letters had been forged between them and Coubourg. The night of the 20th of May, the twenty-two were to have been arrested as they entered their respective houses, and carried to a house in the fauxbourg Montmartre, where every thing was prepared for the commission of the intended crimes. There each victim was to find a *septembriser*, and they were to be buried in a pit dug in a garden belonging to the house. The next day their emigration was to be announced, and

Immediately after the insurrection of the 2d of June, an insidious address was published by the committee of public safety to calm the minds, and in their language to enlighten the understanding, of the people. This address was heard with great indignation by the majority of the convention, some of whom protested with vehemence against the state of humiliation to which they were reduced; while others, to give their dissent a more

and their forged correspondence with Cobourg published. The plan was concerted at the house of Pache the mayor of Paris. The committee of twenty-one had proof of all these atrocities; more than fifty written and subscribed depositions attest the fact; a part of these pieces was in the hands of Berjoing, one of the members of this commission, who had put them into the hands of the administrators of Calvados; but they, at the time they made their peace, did not fail to give them up to the mountain. A more considerable part were in the hands of Rabaut St. Etienne. I do not know whether they have been saved."

solemn form, assembled, and signed individually a protest, in which they detailed the events of the 2d of June, representing in strong colours the despotism which had been exercised, the consequences to which it would lead, and their resolution to take no part in the deliberations of an assembly whose rights had been so shamefully violated *. This protest was signed by seventy-three deputies a few days after the arrest of their colleagues; but it was not then published, since the report promised by the committee of public safety on those who were arrested had not yet been presented; and as this report never appeared, several members of the committee being in the number of the conspirators, the protest was found among the papers of Duperret, and caused the imprisonment of all those who had signed it.

The tidings of the insurrection in Pa-

* See Appendix, No. I.

ris occasioned much fermentation in the departments, who were expected to have demanded of the Parisians, in a manner more serious than by address or remembrance, why the representatives whom they had committed to their respect and protection were retained as prisoners and regarded as traitors. The Parisians, who had been altogether passive during this struggle, were not much moved by these menaces. They had beheld with indifference the progress of the contest. Finding themselves delivered from the oppression of the former government; concluding that no tyrant existed except such as bore the name of king; and persuaded that that system could never return, they were careless whether the plain or the mountain, the *côté droit* or *côté gauche* held the reins of government. This fatal error has been the source of almost all the evils that have desolated the republic; for had the Parisians attended to the political

political duties that were required of them in exchange for their enjoyment of political rights, they would never have seen their fellow-citizens dragged daily through their streets to the scaffold, at the nod of tyrants whom they ought early to have crushed.

During the progress of this conspiracy, the assemblies of the sections where the citizens met to deliberate on public affairs, were either filled by the agents of the conspirators, or governed by the conspirators themselves; and where neither of them had weight sufficient to mislead the citizens, they took advantage of their departure to propose and carry resolutions among themselves, which they proclaimed as the voice of the section. Though these practices were denounced in the convention, and though sometimes the section of to-day came to disclaim what the same section of yesterday had said, yet the discovery of the fraud had

no tendency to awaken the citizens to greater vigilance. Had they known to what end all the artifices of the conspirators tended, they would undoubtedly have been on their guard ; but as they were made to serve the views of the traitors in demanding the expulsion of their representatives, without believing that they had committed any crime ; so they were also made the instruments of consummating the treason by assisting in the violation of the representation itself in the arbitrary arrest of the deputies, without knowing for what reason they were armed and assembled. A long and mournful experience has at length shewn them, that it is not sufficient to feel the love of liberty, without making continual efforts to preserve it ; that so many and various are the enemies which it has to combat before its reign can be permanently established, that as much vigilance is required to guard it from the inroads of the
aspiring

aspiring demagogue, as courage to shake off the yoke of despotism; and that when the sacred code of freedom is violated in one point it leads to the destruction of the whole. When the nobles whom the law had confounded in the class of citizens were persecuted as a *cast*, when men of superior abilities became proscribed for "aristocracy of talents," those who were distinguished for neither deceived themselves in believing they were safe.

Although the citizens remained unmoved at these violations, a considerable number of the departments felt the indignity, and prepared to avenge the national honour. Some made eloquent remonstrances at the bar of the convention; some deliberated on the convocation of the primary assemblies; some proposed sending no farther contributions to Paris, while others took arms to suppress the rebellion of the commune against the republic. For some time the arrival
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of the departmental force was expected ; but the conspirators, who foresaw this formidable opposition to the accomplishment of their designs, had the prudence to provide against it by sending previously into the departments as many of their emissaries as they could spare without weakening their force at home, taken partly from among their accomplices in the convention, who carried with them the importance of representatives of the people.

The conspirators had also the advantage of being invested with the authority of government, as they had seized on the machine. They had possession of the convention, who were compelled to follow the impulse already given them ; they were proprietors of the national wealth, and had the armies at their command. The departments, on the contrary, had no central point of union except the common indignation which the conduct of
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the conspirators had excited. They had no treasure at their disposal but what arose from voluntary contributions ; and while they were deliberating what steps they should pursue, the conspirators, clothed with the national power which they had usurped, reduced the departments to the same state of subjection as they had the convention and Paris. In the western departments, where some of the deputies who were accused had fled, and around whom the people had crowded partaking their indignation, the armies that had hastily assembled as suddenly disappeared ; and the whole of the republic except the city of Lyons submitted to the yoke. The causes of this defection, which have hitherto been involved in obscurity, it being the interest of the conspirators to keep them concealed from the world, have lately been developed by one of the principal actors in those memorable scenes, Louvet, deputy

puty of the department of the Loiret, who distinguished himself early in the convention by his accusation of Robespierre, who unmasked the conspiracy of the 10th of March, and who on the 31st of May was honourably proscribed, but is now restored to his friends and his country. I shall transcribe his own words.

“ Guadet and myself reached Caen on the 26th of June. On the 5th of the same month eight departments, namely, five of the former province of Brittany and three of Normandy, had entered into a common league. They had just sent their commissaries to Caen, and their troops were at the point of arriving. Wimpfen, the general of the whole force, had hitherto confined all his exploits to travelling about and talking, and under the most frivolous pretences delayed every kind of organization. As soon as I saw him I was convinced that he was a determined royalist, for he took no pains to conceal

conceal it. I asked Barbaroux and Buzot what they could expect from such a man, for the support of our cause. One of them answered me, that Wimpfen was a man of honour, and incapable of breaking his engagements, and the other was altogether captivated by his agreeable manners. Guadet and Pethion, who had just arrived, did not feel my apprehensions. They were astonished at my readiness in suspecting every one that was not as much a republican as myself. From that time I saw that every thing was going the same way at Caen as it had done at Paris. Wimpfen was beloved by the Normans; he had a considerable party among the administrators of Calvados, and had gained the confidence of the Bretons. In order to take the command from him, it was necessary to unite and make use of all our exertions; but I found myself altogether unsupported. Every thing therefore was likely to fail on the side of
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the republic. Besides, many Normans, who shewed the most favourable dispositions towards us, because in the credit of the news-papers they believed us to be royalists, changed their conduct in the most pointed manner when by our conversation, and particularly by our actions, they came to know us better. My first hopes were directed therefore towards the south. If my wife had been at Caën, we should have gone aboard some vessel at Honfleur bound to Bourdeaux; and as it would have been very easy for us to have seen whether things went no better there than elsewhere, we should have taken our passage aboard the first American vessel, and have been at this time safe in Philadelphia.

“ Three weeks elapsed, while Wimpfen did nothing but lead to Evreux the two thousand men who had come up from the different departments. In the mean time report had so swelled this little
troop,

troop, that it was said at Paris to be thirty thousand strong. At this period, the patriots there had recovered from their fears, spoke their opinions publicly, and were preparing to overthrow the terrible municipality. Many sections had already sent their commissaries to Evreux, who had carried back to Paris different publications explanatory of our true sentiments, and particularly a piece which they called, but I know not for what reason, Wimpfen's Manifesto, and which was a declaration of the commissaries of the united departments; a declaration which I had composed with great labour, which breathed only peace, fraternity and assistance to the Parisians, but open war and exemplary punishment to some of the mountain, to the municipality and the cordeliers; and this just distinction had produced the best possible effect in Paris. The commissaries besides had seen and borne their

their testimonies against the base calumnies which had been uttered against this departmental army, when it was accused of having worn the white cockade, and expressed its wish for royalty. Every thing in short was so disposed, that if, at this moment, our arms had met but with the slightest success, the revolution would have been effected in Paris, without the interposition of the departmental army ; but it was not in this kind of success that Wimpfen was interested.

“ The mountain under great apprehensions had at length raised in Paris 1800 foot soldiers, the better half of which were praying for our success, and also seven or eight hundred ruffians as cowardly as they were thievish : this collection had just entered Vernon. Then it was that Wimpfen talked of attacking this town ; and here suddenly a Mr. Puysey, of whom we had never heard, was introduced to us by the general, as an officer

ficer full of republicanism and knowledge. He it was whom Wimpfen ordered to attack Vernon, and certainly he very well obeyed his secret instructions.

“ In order to surprise the enemy, he went out in open day with drums beating. He marched during the extreme heat, and then made his soldiers, who had no tents, and who for the greater part had never been in a camp, pass the night in the open air. He lost the whole of the following day in attacking a small castle, which he had the honour of taking. The enemy having by this time been well and duly informed of all his manoeuvres, he, in order to give them still greater advantage, made his troops halt at the entrance of a wood a league distant from Vernon; placed his cannon one piece behind the other along a wall; left all his little army in the greatest disorder; did not even place sentinels; and went to sleep.

at a cottage at half a league from the place. An hour after, a few hundred men suddenly made their appearance, who surprised our men, and fired three rounds of grape shot; but the guns in all probability were charged only with powder, for there is no doubt that it was but a farce well arranged. However that may be, a rout took place immediately among the soldiers, who did not know with what numbers they had to engage, who could scarcely find their arms, and who were looking about in vain for their commander. This was so expeditious a retreat, that, had it not been for the brave soldiers of the department of the Isle and Vilaine, who stood their ground for some little time, not a single field-piece would have been saved. In short, not a man received the slightest wound: the enemy did not advance thirty steps to follow up their easy victory. This adventure did not hinder Mr. Puyfay, whom the

administration of the department of the Eure entreated not to abandon them, from declaring that Evreux was not tenable ; and in reality the next day he withdrew himself sixteen leagues, without striking a blow, and abandoned a whole department to the enemy.

“ On the arrival of the courier who brought us these sad tidings, Wimpfen did not appear at all disconcerted. He moreover assured us that there was nothing unfortunate in this event : he talked of fortifying Caen, of declaring the city in a state of defence, of organizing an army somewhat stronger, and of making paper-money, which should be current throughout the seven united departments.

“ These observations afforded room for deep reflection. Salles and myself, after having a long time conversed on the subject, were convinced that the general, so far from wishing to march to Paris, intended

intended to keep us shut up with him in the city, where his party was prevalent, to establish a communication with England, and to commit us with that power if it were possible; in fine, to make use of us according to circumstances, either to make his peace with the mountain if the coalition of the southern departments should be dissolved, or make his peace with the republicans if they should overthrow the mountain. Our colleagues, to whom we communicated our suspicions, thought us visionaries, and nothing less was necessary to convince them than what happened soon after.

“The general requested to have a conference with all of us who were deputies, on an affair of the greatest consequence. He began by describing to us our situation as very critical, unless we took some vigorous resolution. He was going to Lifieux to organise his army, and to form his camp in such a manner as to make

at least for some time a proper defence. The future, however, required something more permanent. He returned back to his projects respecting Caen, to his proposals about the creation of paper money, &c. &c. &c. and as he judged it necessary to support his reasoning by terror, though he ought to have known that such a mode of proceeding would have little influence on men accustomed to brave daily the fury and the murders of the mountain, an officer, who undoubtedly had been instructed, suddenly entered, and with a frightened look informed the general that there was a riot; that the people had arrested the convoys going to the army; and that they were making violent motions against the deputies. Wimpfen affected to be angry at the precipitation with which he told him this alarming news. It is nothing, said he to the officer; go and talk calmly to the people, make them easy; give

give them a little money, if it be necessary. When this man left us, the general thought he might venture to make the great proposition. Reflect maturely on all that I have said, resumed he : in order to execute great projects we must employ great means. But stay, I am going to speak plainly : I see only one possible mode of providing ourselves with men, arms, ammunition, money, and help of every kind ; *that is, to negotiate with England ; and I myself have the means provided, but I must have your authority, your engagement.*

“ The reader may be assured that I have a perfect recollection of the lines I have written in Italics, and I can also assure him that I have stated truly the scene of the preceding passage. It is difficult to paint the effect which these words produced on my too confiding friends. All of them at the same moment, struck with indignation, without any previous

consultation rose up. The conference was instantly interrupted, though the general tried every means of renewing it.

“Wimpfen, somewhat disconcerted, left us without seeming to feel any resentment. He only repeated to us that he was going to Lisieux, and insinuated, that in order to restrain some malevolent people who were endeavouring in Caen to render us unpopular, we should all do better to remain in that place. I think that every person must perceive the infamous snare into which this worthy ally of the mountain wished to draw us. Had fear or the desire of vengeance prompted us to accede to this proposition, the republic would have been lost as well as our honour. The mountain would have had victorious proofs against us. It would have been they who were republicans, we that were royalists; and all the republicans persecuted for being royalists, would have been arrested, imprisoned,

imprisoned, and guillotined. Our conspiracy, they would have said, extended to the south. It would have been we, and not themselves, who delivered Toulon to the English. I know, indeed, that after their terrible triumphs they did not fail to make such assertions; but they found no honest or enlightened man who gave them credit. They were, therefore, driven to their accusation of federalism; an accusation not less absurd and calumnious.

“The next day Barbaroux and myself went to Liseux. The general was somewhat surprised to see us, but he did not receive us with less courtesy. We learned, what he himself took care not to inform us, that he had just had a secret conference with one of the agents of the chiefs of the mountain, who for three weeks past were throwing away handfuls of assignats at Evreux, and every where on their passage; and who, soon

after, probably sure of powerful support, came with the intention of continuing the same plan of corruption at Caen, even under our eyes. We found at Lisieux many people in arms, but no soldiers, no organization, no discipline, and the rage of making motions. A secret hand in a single day disorganized even the *Breton* battalions which had hitherto been firmly united. The general was at pains to make us observe this disorder, and to lead us to conclude from thence that he could not maintain his position there, but that he must march back with all his troops to Caen, and make this city the central point of resistance, &c. He nevertheless avoided repeating to us his English propositions. Accordingly the retreat took place the following day: all my friends then acknowledged that our affairs were ruined in the western departments. In vain did the general, after having gone back to Caen, where

where he was always desirous of establishing himself, shew dispositions for a serious defence. In vain did he create staff officers, arrange his troops, employ himself in searching for a convenient situation for encampment, establish batteries of eighteen-pounders: all this parade no longer imposed on our colleagues.

“ It appears clear that Wimpfen, the evening before, had given notice by one of the couriers of the committee of public safety, to the mountain; and I hope that I am understood, when I say the mountain, that it is not of the whole body, nor even all its leaders, that I speak, but the principal *cordeliers* of the mountain, such as La Croix, Fabre d’Eglantine, and, who were equally deceiving and shifting between the republicans, Pethion, Guadet, &c. and the dictator Robespierre—that Wimpfen had given information of the bad success of his English

glish overtures, and that it was useless to renew the proposition. It also appears that the mountain then determined to disperse our little band, but without neglecting to throw on our party that colouring of royalism which was so necessary to effect our ruin; and it was without doubt at this period only that they determined to deliver, at least to all appearance, Toulon to the English. What I am now saying will possibly astonish every one who is not well informed as to this business; but when the proper time shall come, I will explain myself fully with respect to this terrible farce of Toulon.

“ It is thought that Wimpfen had a safe-conduct from the mountain, and a ready opportunity of going into England; but I know not what became of Mr. Puyfay, who suffered himself to be so complaisantly beaten at Vernon. The administrators of Calvados had given notice

to the administration of their shameful defection. They had secretly made their peace with the mountain, without giving us any information. The third day only they made it known to us; and the method they took was to send and post up at the gate of the *intendance*, where we lodged, the mountain placard, in which was the decree of our being out of the law."

The counterpart of the scene acted at Paris, between the conspirators and the convention, was attempted at Lyons, and the same day was appointed in both cities for the accomplishment of their purpose. At the head of this provincial conspiracy was a man named Chalier, a Piedmontais by birth (for most of the agents of the conspirators were foreigners) and a sharper by profession, having fled his own country on account of having committed fraudulent bankruptcies. He was sent to Lyons by the commune of Paris, after the massacre of September, and opened his mission by the murder of

nine persons who had been committed to prison by the municipality of Lyons for slight offences. Agreeably to the instructions he had received, and in conformity to the general plan which the commune of Paris and the conspirators had formed, their apostle laboured incessantly to propagate the doctrines of robbery, rebellion, and murder. Seeing that these exhortations had been attended with their due effects in Paris, "the needy villain's general home," where the promise of riches without labour had allured all the idle and profligate to the standard of the conspirators, he was disappointed that more proselytes to this seducing system had not honoured his embassy at Lyons, where society was less disunited, and where industry had established a superstitious regard to property, altogether incompatible with Chalier's system of reform. A few, however, he found who listened to his projects, and to those he communicated his plan of regeneration,

tion, which consisted in placing a guillotine the following day on one of the bridges, where all the capital merchants, who were necessarily aristocrats, were to be executed, and their bodies thrown into the Rhone. Though this secret was imparted under the solemnity of an oath, yet there were some who, touched with remorse, gave private notice of it to the citizens, who took measures to prevent its execution.

Chalier, who ought instantly to have been put to death by the just indignation of the people, was suffered to continue his revolutionary projects, to the great annoyance of the wealthy citizens, against whom his attacks were continually directed. By perseverance he had at length formed a set out of the profligate which are to be found in all large communities, and with their aid he was encouraged to attempt once more the accomplishment of his designs.

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He had been appointed procureur of the commune; and as the municipality were composed of Jacobins, and of others as weak as those were wicked, Chalier, supported by the faction of Paris, became its principal director. Knowing the progress of the conspiracy in that city, he prepared his friends for the same events at Lyons, by declaring openly in the popular society on the 27th of May, that the presidents and secretaries of the sections, together with the rich *egotists*, should be beheaded on the following day. The municipality on the 26th, influenced by Chalier, had levied a revolutionary tax of six millions of livres on the rich, to be paid in twenty-four hours. This municipal levy excited murmurs, as was expected, and gave the anarchists pretences for raising tumults. The rich were destined to be the victims, and Chalier's band prepared themselves to be the executioners. But the Lyonnais might

might have crushed this insurrection in its birth, had not the narrow spirit of traffic, which sees nothing beneficial in society except the accumulation of wealth, made them feel that their country was but a secondary object, and fitted only to employ the attention of those whose time was of less mercantile profit than their own.

Apprised of the intentions of the conspirators, who had made out the list of the proscriptions, and arranged the plan of the massacre, the citizens flew to arms, and seized on the arsenal. The conspirators kept possession of the town-hall, and both parties prepared for action; for Lyons now consisted only of those who intended to murder, and those who did not like to be murdered. The combat was vigorously supported on both sides; for the conspirators were aided by a party of military whom they had previously engaged in their interests. Vic-
tory

tory remained doubtful for a long time, as the battle was fought in the streets of the city, one quarter being in the possession of the conspirators, while the republicans were masters of the other. It was not till midnight that the citizens took the town-hall, which was the headquarters of Chalier's party. This event decided the contest, which had been severe and bloody. The conspirators were imprisoned, and their chief, after a long and formal trial, was condemned by the tribunal to death. Had the same resistance been made to oppression in other communes, that of Paris would have been compelled to submit to the general will; but as the departments had declined the contest, Lyons was left to withstand alone all the resentment of the conspirators, and was besieged a few weeks after this period.

LETTER V.

THE chief point of accusation against the deputies who were arrested on the second of June, was the continued opposition which they were accused of having made to the formation of a republican constitution. This calumny was contradicted by the fact; the proscribed deputies having, after the labour of some months, presented a plan of constitution to the convention, which had been published by its order; but of which it was a part of the conspirators' plan to interrupt and prevent the discussion.

As many believed that a constitution was the remedy for every evil, moral and political, and even physical, that afflicted the state; and that, when once prepared and administered, all its maladies

dies would be cured; some of the departments were appeased by the assurance that their present rulers would give them in a fortnight what they were made to believe their predecessors had so long withheld.

The appearance of this constitution within the appointed time tended greatly to allay the discontents, and gave an air of popularity to the proceedings of the conspirators; for, as long as the people obtained the blessing, they were indifferent from what hand they received it. They were little aware of the purposes of their tyrants, who only giving them one short glimpse of this wished-for constitution, and having obtained their sanction of it, threw it aside, locked up this hallowed book of the law, throwed with a dark veil the tables of the rights of man, and boldly proclaimed a new-invented species of tyranny, under the denomination of revolutionary government.

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That epithet has since justified every enormity, warranted the violation of every principle; and theft and pillage, noyades and fusilades have all received the common appellation of revolutionary measures.

What contributed also to dissipate the storm that was going to be poured on Paris, was the dread which the departments themselves had of extending the civil war, which then raged in the country south of the Loire, when there was a possibility of attaining by milder means the objects they had in view, the re-establishment of their representatives, and confining the extravagant power of the commune of Paris within its just bounds. What also misled them was, the subjection to which Paris itself was reduced, and which, deceived by addresses from the convention and the commune, they mistook for the enjoyment of tranquillity; and what finished the contest was the thunder of the conspirators hurled against
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the departments which had shewn most zeal in favour of the imprisoned deputies, the constituted powers of which were dissolved by the convention, and its members declared guilty of acts of rebellion. It was fortunate for the usurpers, that this almost general and speedy acquiescence took place; as, independently of the coalesced powers, they had a most formidable enemy to contend with in the royalists of the Vendée, who, while these struggles for power convulsed Paris, were organizing a force that, but for the invincible spirit of liberty that inspired the immense majority of the republic, was calculated to overwhelm every contending party, and bring back the antient despotism with all the avenging terrors of sacerdotal and aristocratical rage.

The country which was the scene of this insurrection in favour of priesthood and royalty, is situated between the Loire and the Charente, stretching along the
coasts

coasts between the two rivers, and making part of the territory which was called, under the ancient government, the province of Poitou. It is a country fertile both in corn and pasture; and from its rich abundance distributed plenty to most of the neighbouring departments, and furnished even to the centre of France a considerable part of its supplies. Where nature had done so much to make this region the seat of plenty, the inhabitant was not solicitous to increase his riches by foreign traffic; so that commerce contributed but little to his opulence, and manufacturers were almost unknown. However innocent and pastoral the life of the shepherd and the husbandman has been represented, and however productive of those vices that corrupt and enervate mankind the commercial intercourse between nations may have been found; this communication brings with it an interchange of knowledge and manners

manners which improves and embellishes society, while the permanent habitudes of the former serve to retain him in a state which adds nothing to the common stock of knowledge, and contributes nothing to the progressive improvement of the world. The negative merit of exemption from vices to which we have never been tempted, may be granted to this intellectual darkness, where it is placed beyond the reach of endangering more enlightened society ; but when ignorance becomes the sport of fanaticism, and ambitious men make it the instrument of their guilty designs, it becomes a calamity the most terrible in the list of human evils.

The department of the Vendée, from its local situation, had little other intercourse with the rest of the republic than what arose from the export of the superfluity of its produce ; and while the great and immortal principles which directed
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the revolution awakened in the bosom of every mechanic and peasant throughout France the noble sentiment that no man was superior to him in his rights, the Vendéan, who had only heard of these things through the organ of the noble and the priest, remained the implicit believer and obedient vassal, while his fellow-citizens were rejoicing in their emancipation.

In this insulated department the feudal system had been maintained in all its rigour. The provincial laws of Brittany, which, from the minuteness and singularity of their oppression, would be rather subjects of ridicule than abhorrence, had they not contributed so much to the degradation of the human character in the tyrant who inflicted and the slave who suffered them, were incorporated with other laws equally barbarous, and peculiar to the country.

As this part of the republic, from its
geographical

geographical and moral situation, had received but a few faint rays of the light of that liberty which had burst forth in France; and as already the seeds of discord had been plentifully scattered among the inhabitants by the fanatical clergy, it was fitted to become the retreat of all who were averse to the new order of public affairs. Accordingly the nobles and the priests, who, in the first meetings of the constituent assembly, discovered, that by the removal of those factitious barriers by which they had hitherto been separated from the other classes of the people, they were now to mingle in the common mass, found refuge in these departments, where they trusted that those distinctions might still be respected which had elsewhere sunk into contempt. Their influence was extensive; and as their zeal was quickened by implacable resentment, those laws of which they could not hinder the promulgation, and particularly those

those which respected their own orders, were but imperfectly executed, or apparently obeyed. Having found that that enthusiasm which led the constituent assembly to overthrow these gigantic privileges, had considerably evaporated towards its close; and seeing also that the court, in struggling to regain its lost power, sought their alliance; they grew bolder in their pretensions, and became more active in their hatred towards the establishment of the new government. At first an air of general discontent overspread this part of the country—partial fermentations next succeeded, and the spirit of insurrection at length became so general, that the constituent assembly was compelled to take measures to stop its alarming progress.

The means employed by the legislature were calculated rather to increase than prevent the evil; for, instead of sending commissaries from their own body to

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examine

examine into its causes; instead of enlightening the people, and unmasking and punishing those who had prompted them to rebellion; they entrusted the court with the execution of their decrees, and, as it might have been expected, the insurrection obtained additional force, and even a sort of royal sanction.

The authority of the next assembly was insufficient to repress so alarming an evil. Too much divided by the spirit of party, and too much occupied in struggles against the court, the legislative assembly for a long time applied only palliatives to the disease; nor, till it wore an aspect dangerous to the existence of the revolution, was the assembly roused to the application of any effective remedy. The measure they first proposed was the banishment of the priests who had refused adherence to the new constitution; but this measure appeared so alarming to the court, and so destructive
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of the system it had adopted to regain its lost influence, that the king was advised to make use of the repressive power which the constitution gave him, and to refuse his royal sanction. Though this refusal hastened the destruction of the court, already tottering, it gave new courage to the discontented, who, finding themselves so zealously supported, burst into open resistance in the Vendée and the neighbouring departments, which it required all the exertion of the departmental force to suppress.

The fall of the court suspended for a time the progress of this insurrection; but the unhappy auspices under which the convention met inspired fresh ardour, and led the insurgents to new exertions. In hopes of restoring the monarchy, a vast plan of insurrection was formed, which not only comprehended the Vendée and the adjoining departments, but extended itself through a great part of

Brittany. The convention was too much occupied in resisting the conspirators at Paris to attend to the progress of the royalists, who were suffered to take uninterrupted possession of the Vendée and the neighbouring departments. Before the end of March they had organized an army of 40,000 men, consisting chiefly of peasants, servants of the former nobility, smugglers, poachers and gamekeepers, men well accustomed to the use of arms, and had begun their march towards Paris before the convention were formally advised that any insurrection had taken place. Their army was commanded by experienced chiefs who had served under the antient government : but what gave the rebellion its fiercest rage was the fanaticism which the priest inspired, who marching at the head of their columns, bearing the crucifix in his hand, pointed out to his followers the road to victory or heaven. The progress
which

which the royalists had made before any force was opposed to them was so alarming, and at the period when the Jacobins had seized upon the government at Paris, the portion of the country which the Vendéans had subdued was so extensive, that it seemed doubtful of which party France was destined to be the prey. The royalists had entire possession of the Loire almost as far as Paris, and menaced Rochelle on the one side while they besieged Nantes on the other, and opened a passage into the departments which made part of the former province of Brittany.

The faction at Paris did not fail to improve the events of the Vendée to their own advantage. Pethion, Buzot, Rabaut St. Etienne, Isnard, Lanjuinais, Barbaroux, Guadet, Louvet and others of the proscribed deputies having made their escape, the conspirators declared, in an address to the departments,

that the project of the deputies who were still in arrestation was evidently the same as that of their colleagues, who were gone to facilitate the march of the rebels, and aid them in the establishment of the royal power. This calumny, which was refuted by every address received from the departments*, formed the basis of the accusation which was framed against the Gironde; and the founders and most strenuous supporters of the republic were soon after dragged to the scaffold as the advocates and protectors of royalty.

In proportion as the departments relaxed in their energy, the ferocity of the conspirators increased. An event also happened at this period, which, from the calumnies to which it gave rise, and the consequences it produced, proved fatal to the arrested deputies. This was the assassination of Marat. In the first dawn

* See Appendix, No. II.

of the conspiracy Marat became a principal instrument in the hands of the traitors, who found him well fitted for their purposes; and being saved from the punishment which usually follows personal insult by the contempt which the deformity and diminutiveness of his person excited, he became the habitual retailer of all the falsehoods and calumnies which were invented by his party against every man of influence or reputation. He was the Thersites of the convention, whom no one would deign to chastise; for his extravagance made his employers often disclaim him as a fool; while the general sentiment he excited was the sort of antipathy we feel for a loathsome reptile. His political sentiments often varied; for he sometimes exhorted the choice of a chief, and sometimes made declamations in favour of a limited monarchy; but what rendered him useful to the conspirators was his readiness to publish every

flander which they framed, and to exhort to every horror which they meditated.—His rage for denunciation was so great that he became the dupe of the idle; and his daily paper contains the names of great criminals who existed only in the imagination of those who imposed on his credulous malignity.

After this first preacher of blood had performed the part allotted to him in the plan of evil, he was confined to his chamber by a lingering disease to which he was subject, and of which he would probably soon have died. But he was assassinated in his bath by a young woman who had travelled with this intention from Caen in Normandy. Charlotte Anne Marie Corday was a native of St. Saturnin in the department of the Orne. She appears to have lived in a state of literary retirement with her father, and by the study of antient and modern historians to have imbibed a strong attachment

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ment to liberty: She had been accustomed to assimilate certain periods of antient history with the events that were passing before her, and was probably excited by the examples of antiquity to the commission of a deed, which she believed with fond enthusiasm would deliver and save her country.

Being at Caen when the citizens of the department were enrolling themselves to march to the relief of the convention, the animation with which she saw them devoting their lives to their country, led her to execute, without delay, the project she had formed*. Under pretence
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* Louvet speaks of this extraordinary woman in the following terms:—"A young person came to speak to Barbaroux at the Intendance, where we all lodged. She was tall and well shaped, of the most graceful manners and modest demeanour: there was in her countenance, which was beautiful and engaging, and in all her movements, a mixture of softness and dignity, which were evident indications of a

of going home, she came to Paris, and the third day after her arrival obtained admission to Marat. She had invented a story to deceive him; and when he promised her that all the promoters of

heavenly mind. She came always attended by a servant, and waited for Barbaroux in an apartment through which we passed frequently. Since this young woman has fixed on herself the attention of the world, we have each of us recollected the circumstances of her visits, of which it is now clear that some favour solicited for a friend was only a pretence. Her true motive undoubtedly was to become acquainted with some of the founders of the republic, for which she was going to devote herself; and perhaps she was desirous that at some future day her features should be brought to their recollection.

“I declare and solemnly attest, that she never communicated to us a word of her design; and if such actions could be directed, and she had consulted us, would it have been against Marat that we should have pointed her stroke? Did we not know that he was then languishing under a fatal disease, and had but a few days to live?”

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the insurrection in the departments should be sent to the guillotine, she drew out a knife which she had purchased for the occasion, and plunged it into his breast.

She was immediately apprehended, and conducted to the Abbaye prison, from which she was transferred to the Conciergerie, and brought before the revolutionary tribunal.

She acknowledged the deed, and justified it by asserting that it was a duty she owed her country and mankind to rid the world of a monster whose sanguinary doctrines were framed to involve the country in anarchy and civil war, and asserted her right to put Marat to death as a convict already condemned by the public opinion. She trusted that her example would inspire the people with that energy which had been at all times the distinguished characteristic of republicans; and which she defined to be that devotedness to our

country which renders life of little comparative estimation.

Her deportment during the trial was modest and dignified. There was so engaging a softness in her countenance, that it was difficult to conceive how she could have armed herself with sufficient intrepidity to execute the deed. Her answers to the interrogatories of the court were full of point and energy. She sometimes surprised the audience by her wit, and excited their admiration by her eloquence. Her face sometimes beamed with sublimity, and was sometimes covered with smiles. At the close of her trial she took three letters from her bosom, and presented them to the judges, and requested they might be forwarded to the persons to whom they were addressed. Two were written to Barbaroux, in which with great ease and spirit she relates her adventures from her leaving Caen to the morning of her trial.

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The other was an affectionate and solemn adieu to her father. She retired while the jury deliberated on their verdict ; and when she again entered the tribunal, there was a majestic solemnity in her demeanour which perfectly became her situation. She heard her sentence with attention and composure ; and after conversing for a few minutes with her counsel and a friend of mine who had sat near her during the trial, and whom she requested to discharge some trifling debts she had incurred in the prison, she left the court with the same serenity, and prepared herself for the last scene.

She had concluded her letter to her father with this verse of Corneille,

“ C’est le crime qui fait la honte, et non pas l’échafaud,”

and it is difficult to conceive the kind of heroism which she displayed in the way to execution. The women who were
called

called furies of the guillotine, and who had assembled to insult her on leaving the prison, were awed into silence by her demeanour, while some of the spectators uncovered their heads before her, and others gave loud tokens of applause. There was such an air of chastened exultation thrown over her countenance, that she inspired sentiments of love rather than sensations of pity *. She ascended the

* She excited in this interesting situation a very strong and singular passion in a young man of the name of Adam Lux, a commissary from Mayence. He accidentally crossed the street she was passing in her way to execution, and became instantly enamoured not of her only, but, what was more extraordinary, of the guillotine. He published a few days after a pamphlet, in which he proposed raising a statue to her honour, and inscribing on the pedestal "*Greater than Brutus,*" and invoked her shade wandering through Elysium with those glorious personages who had devoted themselves for their country. He was sent to the prison of the Force, where a friend of mine often saw him, and where he

the scaffold with undaunted firmness, and, knowing that she had only to die, was resolved to die with dignity. She had learned from her jailor the mode of punishment, but was not instructed in the detail; and when the executioner attempted to tie her feet to the plank, she resisted, from an apprehension that he had been ordered to insult her; but on his explaining himself she submitted with a smile. When he took off her handkerchief, the moment before she bent under the fatal stroke, she blushed deeply; and her head, which was held up to the multitude the moment after, exhibited this last impression of offended modesty.

he talked of nothing to him but of Charlotte Corday and the guillotine; which, since she had perished, appeared to him transformed into an altar, on which he would consider it as a privilege to be sacrificed, and was only solicitous to receive the stroke of death from the identical instrument by which she had suffered. A few weeks after his imprisonment he was executed as a counter-revolutionist.

The

The leaders of the faction, who thought every measure good that could be made subservient to their purpose, found this event too replete with favourable circumstances to be neglected. Marat, whom they had thrown aside to die at leisure, unless perchance he should have lived to share the fate to which they afterwards condemned their other agents, was now restored to more than his ancient honours, was proclaimed a martyr, and his death ordered to be lamented as an irreparable loss to the republic. The conspirators declared that no farther doubt of the federalism of the departments remained. The death of Marat was the point of conviction. Every member of the mountain was to be assassinated in his turn, and the traitors of the departments had their accomplices in Paris who had whetted their poniards to involve the city in destruction. Though the Parisians were not sufficiently credulous

lous to believe these calumnies, the faction made them the pretence to proceed to the farther commission of crimes ; and while they endeavoured to amuse the people with what they called the inauguration of Marat and of Châlier, they were meditating the murder of the deputies whom they had driven from the legislature.

It was impossible to contemplate without indignation and despair that glorious revolution, which had opened to mankind the brightest prospects of happiness, and which had promised the most beneficial effects to the world, become the sport of the cruel, and the prey of the rapacious ; to see a people who were called to liberty, bending their necks, like the votaries of the storied assassin of the mountain, at the nod of their tyrant ; to see a nation which had possessed Rousseau, Mably and Voltaire, prostrate in frantic enthusiasm before the shrine of
Marat,

Marat, like the idolaters of Montapama, whose devotion rose in proportion to the hideousness of their gods.

Every day some pretended plot was discovered, some dark conspiracy, attributed successively to nobles, priests, bankers and foreigners, was dragged to light; but the specimens produced of these counter-revolutionary projects were often such as did little honour to the invention of those by whom they were exhibited. Sometimes letters were found from agents of the coalesced powers; but they were generally so ill fabricated that they only deceived those who could not read them.

The departments having submitted to the usurpers, they now began their measures of severity against those who had resisted their authority. The general denomination for disaffection to their principles was that of being suspected; and accordingly a decree was issued to
arrest

arrest all those who came under this title. The revolutionary tribunal, not having all the energy necessary to carry into execution the plans that were meditating, was denounced for its *moderantism*, and the members of which it was composed, renewed.

A certain class of the women of Paris, who gave themselves the title of revolutionary women, had been serviceable auxiliaries to the conspirators, and had taken place of the poissards, who, not having all the energy which the present exigencies required, had yielded the palm to their revolutionary successors. These female politicians held deliberative assemblies, and afterwards presented their views to the convention, while they influenced its debates by their vociferations in the tribunes, which they now exclusively occupied. On the days of tumult which preceded the 31st of May they had mounted guard in person at the convention,

vention, and prevented the execution of certain orders which they disliked. They now presented themselves at the bar of the assembly, and demanded the exclusion of the former nobles from every function civil or military, the renewal of all the administrations throughout the republic, the examination of the conduct of the ministers, the arrest of every suspected person, the raising of the whole nation in arms, and obliging the women to wear red caps. The convention having shewn some disinclination to comply with these modest requisitions, these female politicians insulted some of the members, and the society was dissolved by a decree.

In the mean time the royalists had proceeded almost as far as Tours on their way to Paris. Lyons was in a state of formidable resistance. The Marseillois were at Avignon. Mentz surrendered to the Prussians. The province of Alsace was

was over-run by the Austrians. Valenciennes was taken after a formidable siege, and Cambray was summoned to surrender. The Piedmontese had invaded the department of Montblanc, formerly Savoy; the Spaniards had invested Perpignan, and the English were masters of Toulon.

More efficient measures became necessary than had hitherto been employed, and that which was now adopted was putting into requisition every individual that could be made useful to his country in any situation in which his services were claimed. That part of the community which was destined to the most active service were the young men from 18 to 25 years of age, who under the name of the first requisition were immediately invested with the title of the defenders of their country, and, as soon as arms were procured, sent to the frontiers.

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Whatever may be the difference of political opinion respecting the events of the French revolution, there can be no dissenting voice against the tribute of honour and applause which belongs to the armies of the republic. Amidst all the internal commotions of contending chiefs, regardless of plain or mountain, of *côté droit* or *côté gauche*, they saw their country invaded, and bravely repulsed the attack, leaving the arrangement of the internal concerns of the state to the individuals who were left behind. They were not of that class which composes the usual mass of armies, the idle and the profligate who seek a refuge from industry or want in the vocation of a soldier; and they were of that age when the love of military glory and the passion for liberty are felt with the greatest ardour. This passion was nourished by the consciousness that their sections, their communes, the convention,

vention, and their country were looking on them with fond and anxious expectation; and the decrees which declared that they deserved well of the republic, animated them with a more ardent desire to merit the eulogium.

One of the great springs which mechanically inspired courage and resolution, was the patriotic songs and hymns which were continually resounding through their camps. But the great moral motive that urged them to valorous deeds, was that contempt of death which men in all ages, who combat for liberty and their country, have felt, and this was a motive which their antagonists could not feel. The soldier was conscious that, if he survived, he should partake of the honour he had laboured to acquire; and, if he died, that his country would enroll his name amongst those of its deliverers, and that his fate would inspire that sentiment which our animated poet

has so beautifully described in his ode on the glorious dead.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest ?
When Spring with dewy fingers cold
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod :
By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By fairy forms their dirge is sung :
There Honour comes a pilgrim grey
To bless the turf that warps their clay,
And Freedom shall a while repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there.

“ But the life of a modern soldier,”
Dr. Johnson has observed, “ is ill represented by heroic fiction. War has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon and the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands that perished in our late contest with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy. The rest languished in tents and ships, amidst damps and putrefaction,
7 pale,

pale, torpid, spiritless and helpless, gasping and groaning, unpitied among men made obdurate by long continuance of helpless misery, and were at last whelmed in pits or heaved into the ocean without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome stations, where courage is useless and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly melted away."

From this devastation of disease the French have been exempted; for the evils which Dr. Johnson enumerates most commonly proceed from the absence of those conveniences which money can procure. But a great part of the first requisition, which was taken from the class of the rich as well as of the poor, were enabled, by the attention of their friends, and the expenditure of their own income, to procure not only the means

of plenty to themselves, but to contribute to the accommodation of their less wealthy companions.

LET-

LETTER VI.

THE usurpers saw that those young citizens who had obeyed with alacrity the call of the convention against the common enemy were not fitted to be the instruments of these revolutionary projects. Revolutionary committees had been established in every commune of the departments, and in every section of Paris; but though the last were in general composed of the creatures of the faction, they were not so secure of what they called the *energy* of the committees in the country. For this reason, a certain number of what was termed the most fanfculottide and revolutionary citizens of each section of Paris were chosen by their respective committees to compose a body of six thousand men,

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which

which was called the revolutionary army, and which, accompanied by a * guillotine ambulante, was to issue forth from Paris into the departments, to invite the people to raise themselves to the height of the revolution.

In the mean while the usurpers framed an act of accusation against the deputies whom they had driven from the convention on the 31st of May, and arrested the seventy-three members who had protested against that measure. At this period also the vague report of a spy, that Beauvais a deputy of the convention had been put to death by the English at Toulon, served as a pretext to the usurpers for inflicting twenty years imprisonment on whoever should introduce English merchandize into the republic, and for throwing into prison and confiscating the property of all those who had been born in the British dominions, except such as

* A travelling guillotine.

were employed in manufactures. This impolitic and savage decree, in open violation of the rights of nations, and breach of that hospitality under the protection of which but a few months before they had invited the English then in France to remain among them, was put into execution; and though it met with universal reprobation, yet as terror was the order of the day, no one felt himself sufficiently bold to demand its repeal; and as business of more importance lay before the conspirators than the consideration of the cases of individuals, those who had the credulity to trust to their protection were left to ruminate on their injustice.

The next step taken by the conspirators was that of throwing aside the incumbrance of the constitution. A report was accordingly prepared, shewing the impossibility of conducting the machine of the revolution without the use of extraordinary measures, and the convention

voted without discussion, that the constitution should be set aside, and that the government should become revolutionary. The superiority of a monarchical over a republican government has been said to consist in the unity of its action, particularly in cases of danger. The Romans in time of great public calamity were accustomed to throw a veil over the tables of the laws, and place in the hands of one of their fellow-citizens, whom they called a Dictator, the whole energy of the government, as long as the danger which threatened the state should exist. Rousseau admires this policy, and recommends it in similar cases to all free governments. Of whatever advantage the temporary absence of liberty might have been, had the people of France, like the Romans, chosen those to rule the storm who had the greatest skill or the most acknowledged virtue; those sanguinary and ferocious characters who now seized
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on the power, instead of making this temporary despotism a means of saving the country, like the malevolent genii who preside over evil, filled it with horror, desolation, and death.

To reconcile the nation to the assumption of their new power, the conspirators thought it necessary to shew their distinguishing attachment to what they called the people by the exercise of every kind of persecution against what they called aristocracy, an appellation by no means confined to the adherents of the former court or the nobility. To the "aristocracy of talents" succeeded the "aristocracy of commerce," which signified that he who enriched himself while he enriched his country by the supply of its wants, was an object of suspicion, or a counter-revolutionist. They therefore conceived the project of reducing every article of merchandize and subsistence to what they called the *maximum*, and ob-

liged every merchant and shop-keeper to sell his goods to the public at the prescribed rate, whatever might have been the first cost. Though it was evident to the most superficial observer, that such a measure must be eventually destructive of commerce, and productive of the evil it was intended to prevent; yet, as it was an evil that but remotely affected the consumer, it was calculated to please the lower class of people.

The faction, armed with the absolute power they had usurped, fancied they could control all possible circumstances; and though they could not but perceive that the manufacturer must necessarily cease his labour when the new materials exceeded the stated price of the goods he exposed to sale, and that the merchant could no longer go on with his commerce, when the cargo which he had purchased abroad was struck with the revolutionary *maximum* on its entrance into port;

port; though they could not but see that it was a law fraught with every evil; yet, as it was a blow at the aristocracy of commerce, and a revolutionary measure, it was proposed and adopted.

While they were thus persuading the people what interest they took in their welfare by the introduction of plenty, in the extinction of monopolies, and the reduction of the price of merchandize, they were equally solicitous to shew their regard for the public safety by the punishment of traitors and conspirators. For a long time the Jacobins had demanded the trial of Marie Antoinette, whose existence they declared endangered that of the republic. She was accordingly arraigned for having committed a series of crimes, which in the language of the indictment comprehended not merely counter-revolutionary projects, but all the enormities of the Messalinas, Brunehauts, Fredegondes, and Medicis. A curious account of the

evidence in support of these charges, and the effect which her behaviour produced upon Robespierre, is given by Vilate, a young man of the revolutionary tribunal. The scene passed during the trial, at a tavern near the Tuilleries, where he was invited to dine with Robespierre, Barrere, and St. Just. "Seated around the table," he says, "in a close and retired room, they asked me to give them some leading features of the evidence on the trial of the Austrian. I did not forget that expostulation of insulted nature when, Hebert accusing Antoinette of having committed the most shocking crime, she turned with dignity towards the audience, and said, "I appeal to the conscience and feelings of every mother present, to declare if there be one amongst them who does not shudder at the idea of such horrors." Robespierre, struck with this answer as by an electrical stroke, broke his plate with his fork. "That blockhead
"Hebert!"

Hebert!" cried he: "as if it were not enough that she was really a Messalina, he must make her an Agrippina also, and furnish her with the triumph of exciting the sympathy of the public in her last moments."

Marie Antoinette made no defence, and called no witnesses, alleging that no positive fact had been produced against her. She had preserved an uniform behaviour during the whole of her trial, except when a starting tear accompanied her answer to Hebert. She was condemned about four in the morning, and heard her sentence with composure. But her firmness forsook her in the way from the court to her dungeon—she burst into tears; when, as if ashamed of this weakness, she observed to her guards, that though she wept at that moment, they should see her go to the scaffold without shedding a tear.

In her way to execution, where she

was taken after the accustomed manner in a cart, with her hands tied behind her, she paid little attention to the priest who attended her, and still less to the surrounding multitude. Her eyes, though bent on vacancy, did not conceal the emotion that was labouring at her heart—her cheeks were sometimes in a singular manner streaked with red, and sometimes overspread with deadly paleness; but her general look was that of indignant sorrow. She reached the place of execution about noon; and when she turned her eyes towards the gardens and the palace, she became visibly agitated. She ascended the scaffold with precipitation, and her head was in a moment held up to the people by the executioner.

The trial of Marie Antoinette was followed by that of the accused deputies. Although those guardians of the public weal, the Jacobins, had repeatedly urged the convention to bring forward their trial,

trial, it had been long delayed from the difficulty of finding any proofs that wore the appearance of probability ; and it remained long undecided what should be the charges, and who should be the victims. The substance of the accusation was at length founded on a sort of sportive party romance written by Camille Desmoulins on Brissot and the Brissotins ; and what was meant by the author merely to excite a laugh, was distorted to serve this horrible purpose. Camille, it is said, remonstrated loudly on this perversion of his intentions, and disclaimed any participation in the guilt. He declared that the charges were only extravagancies of his own imagination, and that he could not support any of them by evidence. This remonstrance was ineffectual, and the romance formed part of the indictment, which was filled up with charges of royalism and federalism ; which being presented to the assembly for their sanction,

tion, the decree of accusation passed without a discussion.

The witnesses in support of the charges consisted principally of the chiefs of the municipality of Paris, who were the original accusers. But the defence which the prisoners made was so entirely destructive of the accusation, that though the judges and the jury had bound up their nature to this execrable deed; though the audience, like the tribunes of the Jacobins and the convention, were hired to applaud this crime, the eloquence of the accused drew iron tears down their cheeks, and convinced the whole tribunal of the infamy and falsehood of the charges. Imagine the remorse with which the minds of the jury must have been wrung when their employment compelled them to dress out matter for condemnation from the absurd and lying fables of the conspirators, who were called as witnesses to the indictment; while, to the demon-

demonstration even of the most perverse and ignorant, the prisoners refuted every charge with triumph on their accusers; and if any suspicion had existed with respect to their patriotism or love of the republic, the prosecution would have served to dispel it.

The judges, as well as the jury, although determined to execute their atrocious commission, saw that the defence of the prisoners would carry conviction to the minds of the audience, who, notwithstanding their being hired by the accusers, began to shew signs of compassion. The court, therefore, wrote to the convention to inform them, that if the trials were permitted to proceed, the formalities of the law would reduce them to extreme difficulties; and observed, that in a revolutionary process it was not necessary to be incumbered with troublesome witnesses, or a long defence. This humane epistle was supported by a deputation

tion of the Jacobins, who spoke a still plainer language, by demanding a decree, that the accused should be condemned whenever the jury should feel themselves "sufficiently instructed," without attending to the whole of the charge, or hearing what the prisoners might have to allege in their defence. To this measure the society was urged by the municipal witnesses, who were stung with shame at seeing their perjuries unveiled.

The decree, empowering the jury to stop the prosecution at whatever period they thought proper, was virtually pronouncing the sentence of death: and the tribunal, releasing themselves from the torture they were compelled to suffer, while their consciences were every hour more and more loaded with the conviction of the innocence of the victims whose judicial murder they were bound to perpetrate, lost no time in declaring that they were sufficiently instructed.

Alas!

Alas! in what where they “ sufficiently instructed?” That the men they were going to condemn, were those who were the most distinguished for talents, and most devoted to the establishment of the republic, of which they were the founders. Were not this sanguinary jury sufficiently instructed, that it was for their virtues, and not their crimes, that these victims had been dragged before them? and yet, with all this conviction on their minds, they coolly commanded the murder.

This atrocious condemnation was remonstrated against by the prisoners in vain. In vain they alleged, that against some of them no evidence whatever had been heard; that their names had scarcely been mentioned at the tribunal; and that, whatever pretence the jury might have for calling themselves sufficiently instructed respecting the rest, they could not be informed of the crimes of those against whom no witnesses had appeared.

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The court, sheltering themselves under the sanction of a decree, were little inclined to give the reasons of their conviction; and therefore replied to the arguments of the prisoners, by ordering the military force to take them from the tribunal. Valazé, in a transport of indignation, stabbed himself before the court. Brissot, Vergniaud, Genfonné, La Source, Fonfrede, Sillery, Ducos, Carra, Duperret, Gardien, Duprat, Fauchet, Beauvais, Duchastel, Mainvielle, La Caze, Le Hardy, Boileau, Anteboul, and Vigée, were led to execution on the following day. Vergniaud, having a pre-sage of his impending fate, had early provided himself with poison; but finding that his young friends Fonfrede and Ducos, who he had some hope would be spared, were companions of his misfortune, he gave the phial to the officer of the guard, resolving to wait the appointed moment, and to perish with them.

They

They met their fate with all the calm of innocence, and breathed their last vows for the safety and liberty of the republic. Those who were the melancholy witnesses of their last hours in prison, love to relate how they spoke, and felt, and acted. I have been told by one who was their fellow-prisoner and friend, that their minds were in such a state of elevation, that no one could approach them with the common-place and ordinary topics of consolation. Brissot was serious and thoughtful, and at times an air of discontent clouded his brow; but it was evident that he mourned over the fate of his country and not his own. Genfonné, firm and self-collected, seemed fearful of fülling his lips by mentioning the names of his murderers. He did not utter a word respecting his own situation, but made many observations on the state of the republic, and expressed his ardent wishes for its happiness. Vergniaud was
some-

sometimes serious, and sometimes gay. He amused his fellow-prisoners at times with the recital of poetry which he retained in his memory, and sometimes indulged them with the last touches of that sublime eloquence which was now for ever lost to the world. Fonfrede and Ducos relieved the sombre of the piece by the habitual liveliness of their characters, although each lamented the fate of his brother to their respective friends, and sometimes shed tears over the distress and ruin of their wives and children; for both had young families and immense fortunes. Their courage was the more exemplary, as their fate was altogether unexpected.

Previously to the imprisonment of the deputies, while they were yet under arrest in their own houses, I frequently visited those who were in the number of our friends. Vergniaud had long told me that he saw no just foundation for
hope,

hope, and that he would rather die, than live a witness of his country's shame. Fonfrede and Ducos had the full enjoyment of their liberty till the act of accusation appeared, in which they had not the least suspicion that they should be included. The day previous to the reading of this murderous proscription in the convention, Fonfrede had accompanied us to Montmorenci, about four leagues from Paris, where we had wandered till evening, amidst that enchanting scenery which Rousseau once inhabited, and which he had so luxuriantly described. Alas! while the charms of nature had soothed our imaginations, and made us forget awhile the scenes of moral deformity exhibited in the polluted city we had left; while every thing around us breathed delight, and the landscape was a hymn to the Almighty; the assassins were at their bloody work, and plotting the murder of our friends. The next day

day Fonfredewas sent to the Conciergerie, and we saw him no more. A week after we were ourselves arrested. He conveyed to us, from his dungeon, his sympathy in our misfortunes, and, after his condemnation, wrote to bid us a last farewell; but the letter was carried to the committee of general safety, and never reached us.

They were condemned at midnight. When they returned to their prison, they gave the appointed signal of their fate to their fellow-prisoners, whose seclusion afforded them no other means of knowing it, by singing a parody of the chorus of the Marseillois hymn—

Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étandard sanglant est levé.

After spending the few hours of life that remained, in conversation, now and then enlivened by the sallies of the young and gay amongst them, they bade adieu

to their fellow-prisoners, whose minds were so raised by the heroism which these patriots displayed, that it was some time before they became sensible of their loss.

The dungeon which they inhabited was shewn with profound veneration to every prisoner who afterwards arrived at this preparatory scene of murder. A superstitious respect was paid to the miserable matrafs of Vergniaud; and those who felt neither the force of their patriotism, nor shared in their love for their country, were taught to pronounce with religious awe the names of these martyrs of liberty.

Had these lamented patriots known all the foulness of the crimes which the conspirators were meditating against them, it would have been easy to have withdrawn themselves from their vengeance, as many of their proscribed colleagues did. Some, indeed, fell under the murderer's hands, but some have happily escaped—Lanjui-
nais,

nais, Isnard, Louvet, and some others, appear again on the scene. Barbaroux and Buzot, I am told, are alive; and Pethion, who but a few months before was hailed as the support of his country, may again deserve the appellation—but the rest are gone for ever; and there is no one who has any taste for literature, or feeling for liberty, but will sigh at the remembrance of Rabaut, Guadet, and Condorcet.

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LETTER VII.

Paris.

MY DEAR SIR,

SINCE my last letter was written, I have left Switzerland, and returned to Paris, and have had the unspeakable joy of embracing my family again. I have not yet mentioned to you (for till the Jacobins were destroyed it was too soon to relate) that I forsook home to return no more while Robespierre existed; and Robespierre was then in possession of such established dominion, the spirit of liberty had so bowed itself beneath the axe of the guillotine, from the pastoral hills of Normandy to the orange-groves of Nice, from the ensanguined banks of the Loire to the mourning waters of Vaucluse, that when my mother, while she gave me her last embrace at parting, told me she should see me

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no more, my desponding heart assented to the sad prediction. Upon the fall of the deputies who were proscribed the 31st of May, and who were well known to have honoured us with their friendship, we became a subject of discussion at the committee of public safety, and a mandat d'arrêt would certainly have been issued against us if we had not already been imprisoned in consequence of the law against the English. By sharing the general misfortune of our countrymen in France, we were sheltered from any particular mark of vengeance. We afterwards obtained our liberty by means of the municipality, to whom we were unknown; and when the murderers had satiated their vengeance in the blood of our friends, my family had no longer any peculiar danger to fear. But my situation was far different. During the spring preceding the fatal 31st of May, when the deputies of the Gironde, and

Barrere,

Barrere, passed most of their evenings at our house, I had not concealed that I was employed in writing some letters which have since been published in England, in which I had drawn the portrait of the tyrant in those dark shades of colouring that belonged to his hideous nature; and Barrere, in whose power my life was placed, was now the lacquey of Robespierre, and the great inquisitor of the English at Paris. He had now seared his conscience with crimes, and bathed his hands in the blood of the innocent. What still increased my danger was, that Barrere could not but recollect, with the consciousness of his present vileness in our eyes, the political sentiments which he had expressed in those hours of social confidence, when had he been told that he should become the accomplice of unrecorded horrors, he would have answered with the feelings of Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

thing?" He could not but recollect that on the third of June, the day after the insurrection, he came to our house with looks disordered and haggard, with eyes filled with tears, and a mind that seemed bursting with indignant sorrow; repeatedly declaring that, since the national representation was violated, liberty was lost; deploring the fate of the Gironde, above all of Vergniaud, and execrating the Jacobins, and the commune of Paris. A thousand times he wished that he could transport himself to the foot of his native mountains, the Pyrénées, bid adieu for ever to the polluted city of Paris, and wander for the rest of his life amidst that sublime scenery which he described with melancholy enthusiasm.

It was not a little dangerous to have heard such sentiments from the lips of one who afterwards said boastfully in the convention, " Il n'y a que les morts

qui ne reviennent pas ;"—of one who became the leader of assassinations ; and who, mounting the tribune with the light step of gaiety, dressed up with point and epigram those atrocious edicts of the committee to which his bleeding country answered with her groans. Barrere also knew that there was no danger of my declaring these things at the revolutionary tribunal, since those who were tried were not permitted to speak : and he had no longer any ties of acquaintance with us which might have restrained him from such conduct ; since very soon after the 31st of May, upon our refusing to receive some deputies of the mountain whom he asked leave to introduce to us, he abandoned us altogether.

In the mean time the English newspapers came regularly to the committee of public safety, in which passages from my letters were frequently transcribed, and the work mentioned as mine ; and

those papers were constantly translated into French for the members of the committee. Two copies of the work had also reached Paris; and although one was at my request destroyed, the other might, by means of those domiciliary visits which were so often repeated, have been thrown into the hands of revolutionary commissaries.

Thus I passed the winter at Paris, with the knife of the guillotine suspended over me by a frail thread, when a singular opportunity of escape presented itself, and I fled to Switzerland, with a heart almost broken by the crimes I had witnessed, and the calamities I had shared. I forsook those who were most dear to me on earth, with no other consolation than that I left them exposed only to the common danger of every individual in the country, and relieved from the cruel apprehensions they had felt on my account.

I proceeded on my journey haunted
by

by the images of gens d'armes, who I fancied were pursuing me, and with a sort of superstitious persuasion that it was impossible I should escape. I felt as if some magical spell would chain my feet at the frontier of France, which seemed to me a boundary that was impassable. As I approached the frontier the agitation of my spirits increased; and when I reached Bourg-Libre, the last French post where commissaries were appointed to examine the passports and those who presented them, my heart sunk within me, and I tried to resign myself to a fate which seemed to my disordered mind inevitable. But I found that I had disquieted myself in vain: revolutionary government had relaxed its iron nerve at this distance from the seat of tyranny; and the commissaries on the frontiers, after having performed their office with the mildest urbanity, suffered us to pro-

ceed to Basil, which is only half a league farther.

Some tall stakes driven into the earth at certain distances mark the limits of France and Switzerland. We drove rapidly past them, and were then beyond the reach of revolutionary government, and the axe of the guillotine.

At Basle, now almost the only social speck on Europe's wide surface, where men meet for any other purposes than those of mutual destruction, I was in safety: but I was an exile from my family—from the only friends I had left—my friends in England, to whom I had written immediately on my arrival, in the fulness of my heart and with the fond persuasion that they had trembled for my safety and would rejoice in my deliverance, having (with few exceptions indeed!) returned no answers to my letters. With what overwhelming sensations

sensations did I receive the tidings of the fall of Robespierre, which was to change the colour of my life, and give peace and consolation to so many millions of my fellow-creatures! After waiting till the struggle maintained by the Jacobins against the national representation had happily ended, I returned to Paris. On entering again that polluted city, a thousand fatal recollections rushed upon my mind, a thousand local sensations overwhelmed my spirit. In driving along the Rue Honoré, the appalling procession of the guillotine arose before my troubled imagination—I saw in the vehicles of death the spectres of my murdered friends. The magnificent square of the revolution, with all its gay buildings, appeared to me clotted with blood, and incumbered with the dead. Along the silent and deserted streets of the fauxbourg Germain, I saw inscribed in broad letters upon the gate of every hotel, “propriété nationale,”

onale," while the orphans whose fathers and mothers have perished on the scaffold, and who live upon the alms of charity, pass in silence by the dwellings which are their rightful inheritance.— The red flag waving above the portals of their forfeited mansions, reminded me of an image of horror in De Foe's history of the plague at London; where, he says, every house that was infected was marked with a bloody sign of the cross.

Yet at least we are no longer condemned to despair of finding justice on earth. Every day is signalized by such acts of retribution, that it seems as if heaven visibly descended to punish the guilty, while at the same time mercy and humanity are binding up the wounds of the afflicted, and setting the captive free. We seem to live in regions of romance. Louvet, Isnard, and others of our proscribed friends so long entombed in subterraneous dungeons, wandering over de-
fert

fert mountains, or concealed in the gloom of caverns unvisited by day, now restored to society and to their country, recount to us the secrets of their prison-house, their "hatr-breadth 'scapes," to which we listen with eager anxiety, and tremble at their past dangers.—But I must not thus anticipate. Let me lead you to the convent in the fauxbourg St. Antoine, to which we were transferred in order to make room at the Luxembourg for prisoners whom it was thought expedient to guard more strictly. We were taught by the administrators of the police to consider our removal as a mark of particular indulgence towards us, since we should have the privilege of seeing our friends through the grate, and of walking occasionally in the garden of the convent. Our countrymen were condemned to remain in the Luxembourg, at which they repined and remonstrated in vain. Wives were separated from their husbands,

daughters from their fathers; and as far the greater part of the English were in confined circumstances, and lived by their respective occupations, their resources being stopped by their imprisonment, the little store of assignats which they had saved from sequestration they were now forced to divide, and, instead of sharing their frugal meal together, their expences were doubled. Many were reduced to the most cruel difficulties, who had been accustomed to maintain their families respectably by their industry, and felt that the humiliation of receiving alms was no slight aggravation of the miseries of captivity *. That part of the convent which

* I cannot resist mentioning that Mons. and Madame Du E—, with whose misfortunes and whose virtues you are acquainted, no sooner heard that our property was confiscated in France, and that in consequence of an act of parliament our resources were stopped from England, than they wrote to tell us "that their fortune was at our disposal."

Those

which the municipality had allotted for our prison consisting only of bare walls, we were each of us permitted to return to our respective houses, in order to provide ourselves with beds, and what furniture and clothes we thought proper. We were attended thither by an inspector of the police and guards, together with one of the commissaries of our own section, who had put the seals on our apartments, and who on removing them examined our papers, consisting now only of a few poetical scraps which had escaped the flames. Odes, elegies, and sonnets were instantly bundled up and sent to the municipality, notwithstanding my assurances that the muses to whom they were addressed, far

Those generous friends, together with a few others, endeavoured to atone for the injustice of their countrymen by the steadfast fidelity of their attachment. Such moments of trial and of danger are indeed fitted to be the test of friendship, and call forth the real character: in those respects, the experience of a year of revolutionary government is equivalent to that of fifty years of ordinary life.

from

from being accomplices in any conspiracy against liberty, had in all ages been its warmest auxiliaries. With what melancholy sensations did we re-visit that home from which we were again to be torn in a few hours! How often did my eyes wander over every object in our apartment! The chairs and tables, which we found in the same position as we had left them on our first imprisonment, seemed like mute friends whom it was anguish to leave, and whose well-known attitudes recalled the comforts of the past. With aching hearts we were once more led through the streets of Paris to our new prison. This convent, called Les Anglaïses, was still inhabited by twenty-three English nuns, and, as it was their own property, had not shared the general fate of the monastic edifices. While the French monks and nuns had for more than a year before this period been driven from their retreats, the religious houses

houses both of men and women, which belonged to the English, had been respected, and their inhabitants left undisturbed. The English or rather Irish monks had, however, long since thrown off their habits, and conformed as well as they were able to the new system of opinions. But this was not the case with those religious sisters, whose enthusiastic attachment to the external signs of their profession was greater, and their worldly wisdom less. The inhabitants of the fauxbourg St. Antoine, where they resided, accustomed from infancy to revere them, to have the wants of the poor supplied at the gate of the convent, and, while under the former government they were treated with neglect or disdain by others, to be there received with evangelical humility, felt that their esteem and veneration for the nuns had survived their own superstitious belief. The conquerors of the Bastile, the terror of aristocracy,

cracy, and the vanguard of revolutions, laying aside their bloody pikes and bayonets, humbled themselves before these holy sisters, whom a sort of visible sanctity seemed to encompass, and whom they suffered, notwithstanding the general regulation, to wear the cherished symbols of their order, the veil and the cross, and seven times a day to ring the bell for prayers. When we had passed the sentinels who guarded the convent, the gate was unlocked for our admission by a nun in her habit. She embraced us with affectionate warmth, and, addressing us in English, begged we would be comforted, since she and the other nuns who were to have the charge of us were our countrywomen and our sisters. This soothing sympathy, expressed in our native language, formed such a contrast to the rude accents of inspectors of police, that it seemed as if some pitying angel had leaned from heaven to comfort

fort us. The kindness with which we were received by our amiable countrywomen, contributed to reconcile us to our chamber, which might more properly be called a passage to other rooms, where the glowing tapestry of the Luxembourg was exchanged for plastered walls, and where we had to suffer physical as well as moral evils, the weather being intensely cold, and our wretched gallery having neither stove nor chimney. One circumstance tended to make our situation tolerable, which was that true spirit of fraternity that prevailed in our community, consisting of about forty female prisoners besides the nuns. Into how happy a region would the world be transformed, if that mutual forbearance and amity were to be found in it which had power to cheer even the gloom of a prison!

In addition to the tie of common calamity was the tie of a common country.

try; and in our present situation this bond of union appeared so strong, that it seemed, as Dr. Johnson said of family relations, that we were born each others friends. It was the general study of the whole community to prevent each others wishes. There were no rich amongst us. The rich had made themselves wings, and vanished away before the promulgation of the law against the English; but those who had still any resources left, shared all their little luxuries and indulgencies with those that had none. The young succoured the old, the active served the infirm, and the gay cheered the dejected. There were indeed among us a few persons, who, born of French parents, having passed their whole lives in France, and not speaking one word of our native language, seemed astonished to find by their imprisonment that they were English women. They had no trace or
 recol-

recollection of that country which in evil hour chanced to give them birth, and did not easily reconcile themselves to the grated convent, while their French sisters were enjoying perfect liberty.

When such of the former nobility who were our fellow-prisoners at the Luxembourg heard that we were going to be transferred to the fauxbourg St. Antoine, they gathered round us to express their fears for our safety in that frightful quarter of the city. I was persuaded on the contrary, that we had much more to fear while shut up in this state prison with themselves, than in the fauxbourg St. Antoine, the inhabitants of which were chiefly composed of workmen and mechanics, who in the course of the revolution had acted too much in union to be led to perpetrate any partial mischief; since those immense numbers which had power to overthrow government could not be bribed to commit massacres.

The

The administrators of the police, when they ordered preparations to be made for our reception, announced us to the section as being all the wives and daughters of milords anglois. This was no auspicious introduction: accordingly our first care was to lay aside the honours and dignities conferred upon us by the officers of the police, and which certainly would not have been confirmed by the herald's office. The only distinction we now envied was that of belonging to the privileged class who gained their bread by the labour of their hands, and who alone were exempted from the penalties of the law. We would thankfully have consented to purchase at the price of toil the sweets of liberty, when bereaved of which the sickening soul grows weary of existence. In vain we tried to twine the flowers of social pleasure around the bars of our prison; in vain we "took the viol and the harp, or endeavoured to rejoice

joice at the sound of the organ." That good which alone gives value to every other, was wanting; and music was discordant, and conversation joyless.

Having repelled the calumnious report of our nobility, the revolutionary committee of our section, under whose inspection we were placed; and who visited us in succession every day, began to look upon us with a more propitious eye; and lest our health should be impaired by confinement, they unlocked the garden gate, of the key of which since our arrival they had taken possession, to prevent any attempts to scale the walls, and permitted us to walk two hours every day accompanied by themselves. During these walks we found means to convince them that we had been guilty of no other offence against the state, than that of being born in England; and the common principles of justice taught these unlettered patriots to lament the severity of
our

our fate, which they endeavoured to soften by every mark of honest kindness.

The visits of the administration of police were far less agreeable than those of our good commissaries. The first time they came, Brutus, one of their secretaries, fired with uncontrollable rage at the sight of the nun who unlocked the gate for his admission, rudely seized her veil, which he was with difficulty prevented from tearing off her face. This ferocious pagan threw down the cross which was erected in the garden, and trampled it under foot; and having poured forth a volley of imprecations against the great bell, which still hung at the steeple instead of being transformed into a cannon, he left the dismayed nuns trembling with horror, and hastened to denounced the veils, the crosses, and the great bell, at the municipality. The next morning Pache, the mayor of Paris, sent orders for the bell to be taken down, the
crosses

crosses to be removed, and the nuns to throw off their habits immediately. Nothing could exceed their despair upon receiving this municipal mandate. The convent resounded with lamentations, and the veils which were now to be cast off were bathed with tears.

There was, however, little time to be allowed to the indulgence of unavailing sorrow. Brutus might return, and it was necessary to proceed to action. Accordingly, a council of caps was called in the room of the superior; and after a deliberation, sometimes interrupted by sighs and sometimes by pleasantry, we all went to work, and in a few hours sweeping trains were converted into gowns, and flowing veils into bonnets. One charming young nun, who was a pensive enthusiast, begged that, if it were possible, her bonnet might shroud her face altogether; while another, whose regards were not entirely turned away from this world,

world, hinted that she should have no objection to the decoration of a bow.

My chief consolation during my confinement arose from the society of sister Theresa, that amiable nun who so much wished to hide a face which nature had formed to excite love and admiration. It was impossible to converse with her without feeling that the revolution was a blessing, if it was only for having prohibited vows which robbed society of those who were formed to be its delight and ornament. I never met with a human creature who seemed to approach nearer to the ideas we form of angelic purity, who possessed a more corrected spirit, or a more tender heart. Devotion was her first delight, her unfailing source of happiness; and sometimes, instead of regretting her fate, I envied her feelings, and was tempted to exclaim with Pope,

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot,
The world forgetting, by the world forgot!

Eternal

Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
 Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd ;
 Labour and rest, that equal periods keep ;
 Obedient slumbers, that can wake and weep ;
 Desires compos'd, affections ever even,
 Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.

We were allowed the melancholy indulgence of seeing our friends through an iron grate ; and there were still among the French some persons whose courageous friendship, undismayed by all the frowns of power, and the increasing terrors of revolutionary measures, did not abandon us in our prison. The greater part of the English who were yet in France, having been established in that country for years, had acquired some friends who lamented their misfortunes, and who risked their own personal safety by making unwearied efforts for their deliverance. The dress of our visitors was indeed not a little grotesque, the period being now arrived when the visible signs of patriotism were dirty linen, pantaloons, uncombed hair,

red caps, or black wigs, and all, as Rosalind says, "denoting a careless disorder."

The obsolete term of *muscadin*, which means a scented fop, was revived; and every man who had the boldness to appear in a clean shirt was branded with that appellation, and every woman who wore a hat was a *muscadine*; for the period was still remembered when a round cap was the badge of rotture, nor were the aristocratical pretensions of the hat yet buried in oblivion. It is remarkable enough, that at this period Robespierre always appeared not only dressed with neatness, but with some degree of elegance, and, while he called himself the leader of the *fans-culottes*, never adopted the costume of his band. His hideous countenance, far from being involved in a black wig, was decorated with hair carefully arranged, and nicely powdered; while he endeavoured to hide those emotions of his inhuman soul which his eyes might

might sometimes have betrayed, beneath a large pair of green spectacles, though he had no defect in his sight.

At this period one of the most accomplished women that France has produced perished on the scaffold. This lady was Madame Roland, the wife of the late minister. On the 31st of May he had fled from his persecutors, and his wife who remained was carried to prison. The wits observed on this occasion, that the body of Roland was missing, but that he had left his soul behind. Madame Roland was indeed possessed of the most distinguished talents, and a mind highly cultivated by the study of literature. I had been acquainted with her since I first came to France, and had always observed in her conversation the most ardent attachment to liberty, and the most enlarged sentiments of philanthropy; sentiments which she developed with an eloquence peculiar to herself, with a

flow and power of expression which gave new graces and new energy to the French language. With these extraordinary endowments of mind she united all the warmth of a feeling heart, and all the charms of the most elegant manners. She was tall and well shaped, her air was dignified, and although more than thirty-five years of age she was still handsome. Her countenance had an expression of uncommon sweetness, and her full dark eyes beamed with the brightest rays of intelligence. I visited her in the prison of St. Pelagie, where her soul, superior to circumstances, retained its accustomed serenity, and she conversed with the same animated cheerfulness in her little cell as she used to do in the hotel of the minister. She had provided herself with a few books, and I found her reading Plutarch. She told me she expected to die; and the look of placid resignation with which she spoke of it, convinced me that she was pre-

prepared to meet death with a firmness worthy of her exalted character. When I enquired after her daughter, an only child of thirteen years of age, she burst into tears; and at the overwhelming recollection of her husband and her child, the courage of the victim of liberty was lost in the feelings of the wife and the mother.

Immediately after the murder of the Gironde she was sent to the Conciergerie, like them to undergo the mockery of a trial, and like them to perish. When brought before the revolutionary tribunal she preserved the most heroical firmness, though she was treated with such barbarity, and insulted by questions so injurious to her honour, that sometimes the tears of indignation started from her eyes. This celebrated woman, who at the bar of the national convention had by the commanding graces of her eloquence forced even from her enemies the tribute

of applause and admiration, was now in the hands of vulgar wretches, by whom her fine talents, far from being appreciated, were not even understood. I shall transcribe a copy of her defence taken from her own manuscript*. With keen regret I must add, that some papers in her justification, which she sent me from her prison, perhaps with a view that at some happier period, when the voice of innocence might be heard, I should make them public, I was compelled to destroy, the night on which I was myself arrested; since, had they been found in my possession, they would inevitably have involved me in her fate. Before I took this resolution, which cost me a cruel effort, I employed every means in my power to preserve those precious memorials, in vain; for I could find no person who would venture to keep them amidst the terrors of domiciliary visits, and the certainty, if

* See Appendix, No. III.

they

they were found, of being put to death as an accomplice of the writer. But her fair fame stands in no need of such testimonials: her memory is embalmed in the minds of the wise and good, as one of those glorious martyrs who have sealed with their blood the liberties of their country. After hearing her sentence, she said, "Vous me jugez digne de partager le sort des grands hommes que vous avez assassinés. Je tâcherai de porter à l'échafaud le courage qu'ils y ont montré *."

On the day of her trial she dressed herself in white: her long dark hair flowed loosely to her waist, and her figure would have softened any hearts less ferocious than those of her judges. On her way to the scaffold she was not only composed, but sometimes assumed an air of gaiety,

* "You think me worthy, then, of sharing the fate of those great men whom you have assassinated. I will endeavour to go to the scaffold with the courage which they displayed."

in order to encourage a person who was condemned to die at the same time, but who was not armed with the same fortitude.

When more than one person is led at the same time to execution, since they can suffer only in succession, those who are reserved to the last are condemned to feel multiplied deaths at the sound of the falling instrument, and the sight of the bloody scaffold. To be the first victim was therefore considered as a privilege, and had been allowed to Madame Roland as a woman. But when she observed the dismay of her companion, she said to him, "Allez le premier : que je vous épargne au moins la douleur de voir couler mon sang*." She then turned to the executioner, and begged that this sad indulgence might be granted to her fellow sufferer. The executioner told her that

* "Go first : let me at least spare you the pain of seeing my blood shed."

he

he had received orders that she should perish first. "But you cannot, I am sure," said she with a smile, "refuse the last request of a lady." The executioner complied with her demand. When she mounted the scaffold, and was tied to the fatal plank, she lifted up her eyes to the statue of Liberty, near which the guillotine was placed, and exclaimed, "Ah Liberté, comme on t'a jouée*!" The next moment she perished. But her name will be recorded in the annals of history, as one of those illustrious women whose superior attainments seem fitted to exalt her sex in the scale of being.

She had predicted that her husband would not survive her loss, and her prediction was fulfilled. Roland, who had concealed himself till this period, no sooner heard the fate of his wife, whose

* "Ah Liberty! how hast thou been sported with!"

influence over his mind had often been a subject of reproach amongst his enemies, than, feeling that life was no longer worth possessing, he put an end to his existence. His body was found in a wood near the high-road between Paris and Rouen: the papers which were in his pocket-book were sent to the committee of general safety, and have never seen the light. His unhappy daughter found an asylum with an old friend of her proscribed parents, who had the courage to receive her at a period when it was imminently dangerous to afford her protection. But the time probably now draws near when this child will be adopted by her country, and an honourable provision will be made for her, as a testimony of national gratitude towards those who gave her birth.

Amidst the extraordinary changes which were passing in France, the convention now changed time itself, and decreed the new calendar. A report was
made

made on it, so philosophical and so pleasing to the imagination, that amidst the sanguinary measures of those days, it seemed to the oppressed heart what a solitary spot of fresh verdure appears to the eye amidst the cragginess of loursing rocks, or the gloom of savage deserts. Love of change is natural to sorrow; and for my own part I felt myself so little obliged to the months of my former acquaintance, which as they passed over my head had generally brought successive evils in their train, or served as the anniversaries of some melancholy epocha, that I was not much displeased to part with them for months with appellations that bring to the mind images of nature, which in every aspect has some power of giving pleasure, from Nivose the month of snows, to Floreal the month of flowers. I therefore soon learnt to count the days of my captivity by the new calendar; which was highly necessary,

fary, since, if a reclamation for liberty had been dated on Monday instead of *Primidi*, or on Tuesday to the neglect of *Duodi*, the police would not only have passed to the order of the day, but declared the writer *suspect*. After two months imprisonment we obtained our liberty, in consequence of the unwearied efforts which were made for that purpose by a young Frenchman whom my sister has since married. He was at Rouen in Normandy when the decree against the English arrived, and a few hours after saw a long procession of coaches pass through the streets filled with English prisoners, who, just torn from their families and their homes, were weeping bitterly. Deeply affected by this spectacle, he flew to Paris with the resolution of obtaining our liberty, or of sharing our prison. He haunted the municipality every night, attended the levées of administrators of police every morning,

risqued

risqued his own personal safety a thousand times, and at length, like a true knight, vanquished all obstacles, and snatched his mistress from captivity. I could not help lamenting, that he was compelled to make application for our release to Chaumette, the procureur of the commune, who had been the principal evidence against the deputies of the Gironde. Nothing could be more cruel than this kind of humiliation—

Prostrate our friends' dire murderer to implore,
And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore.

With what delicious emotions did we return to our own habitation! After passing two months in prison at such a period, we felt the blessedness of home in its full extent. To range through our own apartments without being pursued by guards or jailors, to return to domestic comforts and domestic peace, excited sensations the most delightful.

Society

Society had indeed vanished, and home was but a milder prison, where we lived in voluntary seclusion, trembling at every knock at the gate, lest it should bring the mandate of a new arrestation; and afraid to venture out, lest we should be found guilty of an English physiognomy, by some of the numerous spies of the police, who were continually prowling through the streets of Paris. These indeed were the only persons we had to fear; for even at the very moment when the permanent order of the day at the Jacobins was the crimes of the English, far from receiving the smallest insult from the people of Paris, they displayed the utmost sympathy for our situation, and our release from prison seemed to diffuse general satisfaction through our whole neighbourhood.

The prisons became more and more crowded, and increasing numbers were every day dragged to the scaffold. *Sus-*
pect

test was the warrant of imprisonment, and *conspiracy* was the watch-word of murder. One person was sent to prison, because aristocracy was written in his countenance; another, because it was said to be hidden at his heart; many were deprived of liberty, because they were rich; others, because they were learned; and most who were arrested enquired the reason in vain.

LETTER VIII.

Paris.

A FEW weeks after our release from prison, Rabaut de St. Etienne was put to death. He was one of the most enlightened and virtuous men whom the revolution had called forth, and had acquired general esteem by his conduct as a legislator, and considerable reputation by his talents as a writer. He was the president of the famous committee of twelve, which was appointed by the convention, previously to the 31st of May, to examine into the conspiracies which threatened its existence, and which, as I have already related, hastened its partial dissolution. Rabaut, as often as he presented himself to make the report, was compelled by the interruptions of the conspirators and their agents to retire

tire from the tribune, until that moment arrived, when he, together with the members of the commission, and the deputies of the Gironde, were expelled, or torn from the convention ! I saw him on this memorable day (for he took shelter for a few hours at our house) filled with despair, not so much for the loss of his own life, which he then considered as inevitable, as for that of the liberty of his country, now falling under the vilest despotism. He escaped arrest on the 2d of June, from not having been present at the convention when the conspirators consummated their crime by means of the military force of Paris, and concealed himself in the house of a friend, with his brother, one of the seventy-three deputies who had signed the protest.

They enclosed part of a room for their place of shelter, and built up the wall with their own hands, placing a book-
case

case before the entrance, so that there was not the least appearance of concealment. They employed a carpenter, in whom they had great confidence, to make the door, and the wretch betrayed them. Rabaut de St. Etienne was immediately brought before the revolutionary tribunal to have his person identified, for he was now outlawed, which in France is the sentence of death. He was led to execution; and his wife, a most amiable woman, unable to support the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, put an end to her existence. His brother was taken to the Conciergerie, where he languished with three other victims, for many months, in a subterraneous dungeon; and there being only one bed allotted for four persons, he lay upon the damp floor, and contracted such violent disorders, that his life was long despaired of. He has now taken his seat in the convention. The generous friend and
his

his wife, who had given the brothers an asylum, were also dragged to prison; and some time after were condemned, for this noble act of friendship, to perish on the scaffold.

If France, during the unrelenting tyranny of Robespierre, exhibited unexampled crimes, it was also the scene of extraordinary virtue; of the most affecting instances of magnanimity and kindness. Of this nature was the conduct of a young man, who being a prisoner with his brother, happened to be present when the names of the victims were called over, who were summoned to appear the next day before the sanguinary tribunal. The young man found the name of his brother, who at that moment was absent, upon the fatal list. He paused only an instant to reflect, that the life of the father of a large family was of more value than his own: he answered the call, surrendered himself to the officer, and
was

was executed in his brother's stead. A father made the same sacrifice for his son; for the tribunal was so negligent of forms, that it was not difficult to deceive its vigilance.

The increasing horrors which every day produced, had at length the effect of extinguishing in every heart the love of life, that sentiment which clings so fast to our nature. To die, and get beyond the reach of oppression, appeared a privilege; and perhaps nothing appalled the souls of the tyrants so much as that serenity with which their victims went to execution. The page of history has held up to the admiration of succeeding ages, those philosophers who have met death with fortitude. But had they been led among the victims of Robespierre to execution, they would have found themselves, in this respect, undistinguished from the crowd. They would have seen persons of each sex,
of

of all ages, and all conditions, looking upon death with a contempt equal to their own. Socrates expiring surrounded by his friends, or Seneca and Lucan sinking gently into death, have perhaps less claim to admiration than those blooming beauties, who in all the first freshness of youth, in the very spring of life, submitted to the stroke of the executioner with placid smiles on their countenances, and looked like angels in their flight to heaven.

Among the victims of the tyrants, the women have been peculiarly distinguished for their admirable firmness in death. Perhaps this arose from the superior sensibility which belongs to the female mind, and which made it feel that it was less terrible to die, than to survive the objects of its tenderness. When the general who commanded at Longwy on its surrender to the Prussians was condemned to die, his wife, a beautiful

young woman of four-and-twenty years of age, who heard the sentence pronounced, cried out in a tone of despair, "Vive le roi!" The inhuman tribunal, instead of attributing her conduct to distraction, condemned her to die. Her husband, when he was placed in the cart, was filled with astonishment and anguish when he saw his beloved wife led towards it. The people, shocked at the spectacle, followed her to the scaffold, crying, "Elle n'a pas mérité la mort." "Mes amis," said she, "c'est ma faute; j'ai voulu périr avec mon mari *."

The fury of these implacable monsters seemed directed with peculiar virulence against that sex, whose weakness man was destined by nature to support. The scaffold was every day bathed with the

* "She did not deserve death."—"My friends, it is my own fault; I was resolved to perish with my husband."

blood

blood of women. Some who had been condemned to die, but had been respited on account of their pregnancy, were dragged to death immediately after their delivery, in that state of weakness which savages would have respected. One unfortunate woman, the wife of a peasant, had been brought to Paris, with nineteen other women of the same class, and condemned to die with her companions. She heard her sentence without emotion ; but when they came to carry her to execution, and take away the infant who was hanging at her breast, and receiving that nourishment of which death was so soon to dry up the source, she rent the air with her cries, with the strong shriek of instinctive affection, the piercing throes of maternal tenderness—But in vain ! the infant was torn from the bosom that cherished it, and the agonies of the unfortunate mother found respite in death.

Fourteen young girls of Verdun, who had danced at a ball given by the Prussians, were led to the scaffold together, and looked like nymphs adorned for a festival. Sometimes whole generations were swept away at one moment ; and the tribunal exhibited many a family-piece, which has almost broken the heart of humanity. Maleherbes, the counsel of Louis XVI, was condemned to die at eighty years of age, with his daughter, and son-in-law, his grand-daughter and grand-son.

His daughter seemed to have lost sight of every earthly object but her venerable parent : she embraced him a thousand times on the way to execution ; bathed his face with her tears ; and when the minister of death dragged her from him, forgetting that the next moment put an end to her own, she exclaimed, " Wretch, are you going to murder my father ? "

These

These proscribed families seemed to find the sweetest source of consolation in dying together, and to consider the momentary passage which they were going to make, as so much the less painful, since they should undergo no separation, but enter at same the instant into another state of existence. A young lady, the former marchioness of Bois-Berenger, was imprisoned in the Luxembourg with her whole family. When her father, mother, and younger sister received their act of accusation, and she found herself alone exempted, she shed a flood of tears, her heart was overwhelmed with anguish. " You will die without me," she cried ; " I am condemned to survive you ; we shall not perish together !" While she abandoned herself to despair, her act of accusation arrived : a ray of transport was instantly diffused over her countenance, she flew into the arms of her parents, and embraced them. " My dear mother," she

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exclaimed, " we shall die together!" When the family was transferred to the Conciergerie, she never left her mother a moment, but watched over her with unwearied tenderness; and while she tried to sooth her sufferings by her filial endearments, she endeavoured to inspire her with courage by the example of her own heroic fortitude. It was the picture of a sort of Roman charity. The unfortunate mother was mute, and her whole soul seemed petrified with horror. She seemed another Niobe. Her admirable daughter died with the most noble resolution.

Mademoiselle Malefi, her younger sister, when condemned to die, said to her father with naïveté, " Je me ferrerai tant contre vous, mon bon pere, vous qui êtes si honnête homme, que Dieu me laissera passer malgré mes péchés*."

* " I will cling so fast to you, my dear father, you, who are so good, that God will suffer me to pass in spite of my transgressions."

In

In the prison of the Force, the men were allowed to breathe the air in a courtyard separated by a wall from the habitation of the women. A common-sewer was the only means of communication. At that spot, an unhappy son presented himself every morning and every night, to enquire after his mother, who was condemned to die, but reprieved because she was pregnant, and after her delivery executed. That pious child, in his early age already the victim of misfortune, knelt down before the infectious sewer, and, with his mouth placed upon the hole, poured forth the feelings of his filial tenderness. His younger brother, a lovely child of three years of age, and who was suffered to remain with his mother till her last moments, was often placed at the opposite end of the sewer, and answered for his mother when she was too ill to undertake that task herself. A person of my acquaintance

heard him say, "Mama a moins pleuré cette nuit—un peu reposée, et te souhaite le bon jour; c'est Lolo, qui t'aime bien, qui te dit cela *." At length this unfortunate mother, when going to execution, transmitted to her son, by the sewer, her long and graceful tresses, as the only inheritance she had to give. She then bade her infant a last farewell, and was led to the scaffold, where her husband had perished some months before.

One of the persons most distinguished by their noble contempt of death was Girey Dupré, with whom I was well acquainted. He was the writer of a paper called the *Patriote François*, in conjunction with Brissot: he had acquired a high degree of literary reputation, and maintained his mother, a widow, by the labours of his

"* Mamma has not cried so much to-night—She has slept a little, and wishes you a good morning: it is Lolo who speaks to you, who loves you very much."

pen. He was twenty-four years of age, and his countenance was one of the most agreeable I ever saw. To these personal advantages he united the most frank and pleasing manners, and distinguished powers of conversation. He had defended the deputies of the Gironde with too much energy not to be involved in their fate, and he was also connected by the ties of friendship with Brissot. Dupré was forced to fly from his persecutors, and seek refuge at Bordeaux, where he was seized, and brought back in irons to Paris. Far from being depressed by his approaching fate, the natural gaiety of his disposition never forsook him a single moment. When interrogated at the tribunal with respect to his connection with Brissot, he answered only in these words*,
 “ J’ai connu Brissot; j’atteste qu’il a vécu comme Aristide, et qu’il est mort comme

* “ I knew Brissot; I attest that he lived like Aristides, and died like Sydney the martyr of liberty.”

Sydney martyr de la liberté." He presented himself at the tribunal with his hair cut off, the collar of his shirt thrown open, and already prepared for the stroke of the executioner. On his way to the scaffold he saw Robespierre's mistress at the window of his lodging, with her sister, and some of their ferocious accomplices. "A bas les tyrans et les dictateurs * !" cried Dupré, repeating this prophetic exclamation till he lost sight of the house. While going to execution, he sung in a triumphant tone a very popular patriotic song which he had himself composed, and of which the chorus was "Plutôt la mort que l'esclavage †." That cherished sentiment he fondly repeated even to his last moment, and death left the half-finished sentence on his lips.

Claviere, who had been contemporary minister with Roland, and who was im-

* "Down with tyrants and dictators!"

† "Rather death than slavery!"

prisoned

prisoned in the Conciergerie, upon receiving his act of accusation, saw that the list of witnesses against him was composed of his most implacable enemies. "These are assassins," said he to a fellow prisoner; "I will snatch myself from their rage."

He then repeated these lines of Voltaire,

"Les criminels tremblans sont trainés au supplice ;

"Les mortels généreux disposent de leur sort ;"

and after deliberating with his companion upon the most effectual manner of striking himself so that the dagger might reach his heart, he retired to his cell, where he was found a few minutes after breathing his last sigh. Madame Claviere, upon receiving the tidings of his death, swallowed poison, after having embraced her children, and regulated her affairs. Notwithstanding his suicide, the property of Claviere was confiscated, as if he had been regularly condemned. A law had lately been passed to construe an act of suicide into a counter-revolution-

ary project, when the father of a family, who knew that his life was devoted, had voluntarily put an end to his existence in the hope of preserving his children from want. Robespierre and his financial agents found nothing more pressing than to baffle those conspiracies against the revenues of their government; for confiscation was so evidently the leading motive for the great mass of their judicial assassinations, that the guillotine, amongst other numerous titles, was most generally called the "minister of finance." The tribunal now began, to use the language of the orator *, "to look into their cash account for delinquency, and found the offenders guilty of so many hundred thousand pounds worth of treason. They now accused by the multiplication table, tried by the rule of three, and condemned, not by the sublime institutes of Justinian, but by-

* See Mr. Sheridan's eloquent speech on Mr. Hastings's trial.

the unerring rules of Cocker's arithmetic."

On some occasions the genuine feelings of nature burst forth amidst the stupefied terror that had frozen every heart. A law had lately passed, obliging every merchant to inscribe on his door the stock of merchandize in his warehouse, under the penalty of death. A wine-merchant, whose affairs had called him hastily into the country, entrusted the business of the inscription to his son, who from ignorance or negligence, for it was clearly proved that there existed no intention of fraud, had omitted to affix the declaration in the precise words of the law. The conscientious jury of the revolutionary tribunal condemned him to death, presuming on the counter-revolutionary intention in this case from the act, though they were in general accustomed, for want of other evidence, to find the act by guessing at the intention. The innocent prisoner had prepared himself for death, when the mi-

nister of justice, informed of the case, wrote to the convention, demanding a respite. His letter had not been half read before the hall resounded with the cry of "reprieve, reprieve !" and fearing that the act of pardon would arrive too late, the convention, dispensing with the usual formalities, not only sent its officers and part of the military force, but great numbers of the deputies rushed out to stop the execution. The officer who received the order first, with which he flew towards the place of the revolution, told me, that on his coming out of the convention he saw the scaffold reared and the crowd assembled. He had scarcely reached the first tree of the vista when he saw the fatal knife descend ; he redoubled his speed, but before he got to the end of the walk another head had fallen ; a third person had mounted the scaffold, but the voice of the messenger was too weak, from the efforts he had made to reach the spot,

to

to be noticed by the multitude. The fourth had ascended when he gained the place, rushed through the crowd, called to the executioner, and leaped on the scaffold. The prisoner had been stripped, his shoulders were bare, and he was already tied to the plank ; when the cry of " reprieve " burst forth. The officer enquired his name, which the young man told him. " Alas ! you are not the person ! " he replied. The prisoner submitted calmly to his fate.

The bearer of the reprieve, who is a person of a very benevolent disposition, declared that he never felt so acute a pang as when he was compelled to turn away from this unfortunate victim. He hastened, however, to the prison, where he found the person who was reprieved awaiting the return of the cart and the executioner, his hair cut and his hands tied, to be led to death at another part of the city where his house stood. A wife and nine

children were deploring the miserable loss of a husband and a father, when the officer who had brought the tidings of life to the prisoner, went at his request to carry them to his distracted family. I need not describe what he related to me of the scene—your heart will readily fill up the picture.

That class of men who were peculiarly the object of the tyrant's rage were men of letters, with respect to whom the jealousy of the rival mingled with the fury of the oppressor, and against whom his hatred was less implacable for having opposed his tyranny, than for having eclipsed his eloquence. It is a curious consideration, that the unexampled crimes of this sanguinary usurper, and the consequent miseries which have desolated the finest country of Europe, may perhaps, if traced to their source, be found to arise from the resentment of a disappointed wit. Robespierre, for the misfortune of humanity,

ty, was persecuted by the most restless desire of distinguishing himself as an orator, and nature had denied him the power. He and his brother were born at Arras, and left orphans at an early age. The bishop of Arras had bestowed on them the advantages of a liberal education. Robespierre distinguished himself by his application to his first studies, and obtained many literary prizes. At the age of sixteen, elated by the applause he had received, he fancied himself endowed with such rare power of genius as would enable him to act a splendid part on the theatre of the world, and his friends indulged the same fond expectation. He applied to the study of the law, and already in imagination contemplated himself disputing with the first orators of the age the palm of eloquence. Experience, however, convinced his friends, and at length himself, that they had indulged a vain illusion. He discovered no taste or aptitude for the profession

feſſion for which he was deſigned, became
 weary of ſtudy, was checked by the
 ſlighteſt difficulties ; and being found de-
 ſtitute of thoſe talents which were neceſ-
 ſary to his ſucceſs as a public ſpeaker,
 his benefactor, after a trial of ſufficient
 length, refuſed to ſupport him any longer
 at a conſiderable and fruitleſs expence at
 Paris, but ordered him to return to Arras,
 where in an humble ſphere, better ſuited
 to the mediocrity of his abilities, he
 might purſue his profeſſion as a lawyer.
 Robeſpierre was compelled to return to
 Arras ; which, after the ſplendid dreams
 he had indulged of fame and honours
 in the capital, was an humiliation he
 felt keenly, but which he brooded over
 in ſilence : for he never on any occa-
 ſion diſplayed his ſenſibility to mortifica-
 tions, which was in proportion to his ex-
 ceſſive vanity, but concentrated within his
 vindictive ſoul his diſgrace, his reſent-
 ment, and his projects of vengeance. From

the

the period of his return to Arras may be dated his abhorrence of men of talents. From that moment, instead of admiring genius, he repined at its existence. The same feelings clung to his base and envious spirit when he had usurped his dictatorial power. He made it pain of death to be the author of what he called seditious publications, by which means it was easy for him to involve men of letters in a general proscription. He suppressed every dramatic piece in which there were any allusions he disliked, or wherein the picture or history held up to view any feature of his own character. And it was his plan to abolish theatrical entertainments altogether; for he considered the applause bestowed on fine poetry as something of which his harangues were defrauded. He held up men of letters to the people as persons hostile to the cause of liberty, and incapable of raising themselves to the height of the revolution; and, to make them still greater objects of

mistrust

mistrust and suspicion, he had long instructed his agents to declaim unceasingly against them as *statesmen* ; the meaning of which word, in the dictionary of these conspirators, was counter-revolutionist. Their system had even arrived at some maturity, when Brissot, in his speech for an appeal to the people on the trial of the late king, thus portrays them :

“ Il semble, à entendre ces hommes, qu'on ne puisse être à la hauteur de la révolution, qu'en montant sur des piles de cadavres. Il semble que le secret de l'homme d'état soit maintenant le secret des bourreaux. Veut-on faire entendre le langage de la saine politique ? on est foudroyé par des puissances étrangères. Veut-on parler celui de la raison ? c'est de la philosophie toute-pure, s'écrie-t-on ; et on accoutume la multitude à mépriser sa bienfaitrice, à diviniser l'ignorance*.”

“ L'igno-

* “ According to these men, no one can possibly
be

“L’ignorance de la multitude est le secret du pouvoir des agitateurs comme des despotes ; c’est là le secret de la durée de l’art de calomnier. Voilà pourquoi ils s’élèvent contre la philosophie, qui veut affermir la liberté sur la raison universelle. Voilà pourquoi ils plaisantent sur le système d’éducation, sur l’utilité des écoles primaires. Il s’agit bien de tout cela, c’est de massacres qu’il faut entretenir le peuple. Voilà pourquoi ils supposent, ils accusent, sans cesse l’aristocratie du talent. Ah pourquoi le talent ? n’est-il qu’un être métaphysique ? Avec quel

be at the height of the revolution without mounting on heaps of dead. It seems as if the knowledge of the statesman was commensurate only with the skill of the executioner. If we speak a language dictated by sound policy, we are in the pay of foreign powers. Do we speak that of reason ? This is nothing, they exclaim, but the dreams of philosophy : and thus the multitude are instructed to despise their benefactors, and deify ignorance.”

doux

doux plaisir ces Vandales le nivelleroient, si leur faux pourroient l'atteindre* !”

One of the objects of Robespierre's resentment was M. Bitauby, a Prussian, well known in the literary world by his elegant translation of Homer into French. He was a member of the academy at Berlin, from which the king of Prussia ordered his name to be struck out, and the pension with which the great Frederic had rewarded his merit to be discontinued.

* “The ignorance of the multitude is the master-spring of the power of *anarchists* as well as of despots : it is by this they keep alive the breath of calumny. Furnished with this engine, they make war on philosophy, which teaches us that universal reason is the only basis of liberty ; and thus deride every plan of education, and deny the utility of public schools. These are reveries, say they ; the people must be regenerated with blood. This is the reason why they are inveighing so continually against the aristocracy of genius. Alas ! why has knowledge only a metaphysical existence ? With what complacency would not these Vandals bring it to their own level, if their destroying scythe could reach it !”

nued,

nued, on account of his avowed attachment to the principles of the revolution. M. Bitauby had fixed his residence at Paris several years previous to that event. I have been acquainted with him and his lady since my first arrival in France, and have never met with persons who blended with the wisdom and seriousness of age, so much of all that is amiable in youth. M. Bitauby, in the first days of the revolution, had been personally acquainted with Robespierre, who frequently dined at his house; but he was not long in discovering the sanguinary and fanatical ideas of liberty which filled the soul of the tyrant, and which so much disgusted him that he gave up his acquaintance.

Robespierre did not forget the affront, which he had now the power to avenge. M. Bitauby and his wife were dragged to prison in the beginning of the winter, where they languished ten months; and, deprived

deprived of those cares which their age and their infirmities required, they had almost sunk beneath their weight. Madame Bitauby's indispositions required medical assistance ; but so many formalities were necessary before a physician could be admitted into the prison, that, if the disorder was not of a lingering nature, the patient expired while the police were arranging the ceremonials previous to his relief. During the last months of Robespierre's usurpation, the prisoners were refused the consolation of being attended by their own physicians. Professional men were appointed by the police ; and as selections were made among those who were able to give clearer proofs of their Jacobin principles than of their medical skill, these revolutionary doctors sometimes robbed the revolutionary jury of their prey. A few however of these " officers of health" possessed the negative merit which Dr. Franklin ascribed to old and experi-

experienced physicians, "*they let* their patients die," for the remedies they administered were of too harmless a nature to be capable of doing mischief. The physician of the Conciergerie had as strong a predilection for tisanne as Dr. Sangrado for hot water. Tisanne was the vivifying draught which was destined to soothe all pains, and heal all maladies. One day the doctor, after having felt a patient's pulse, said to the jailor, "He is better this morning." "Yes," answered the jailor, "*he* is better, but the person who lay in this bed yesterday is dead." "Eh bien," resumed the doctor coolly, "qu'on donne toujours la tisanne."

M. and Madame Bitauby had an advocate in their distress whom it was difficult indeed to resist. This was an old servant of eighty years of age. His figure was so interesting that Sterne's pencil only could sketch it well; and had Sterne seen him, he would not have failed to draw his

his portrait. He pleaded the cause of his master with such pathetic eloquence, that at the revolutionary committee he sometimes "drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek." But the old man was eloquent in vain, and was sinking with despair into the grave when the revolution of the 9th of Thermidor restored his master and mistress to liberty.

The fate of Boucheu, author of a poem called "The Months," excited particular sympathy. He passed his time in prison, in educating one of his children, and his employment seemed to charm away his cares. The day he received his act of accusation, knowing well the fate that awaited him, he sent his son home, giving him his portrait, which a painter who was his fellow-prisoner had drawn, and which he ordered the child to give his mother. Below the picture he had written the following lines :

"Ne

“ Ne vous étonnez pas, objets charmans et doux,
 Si quelqu’air de tristesse obscurcit mon visage ;
 Lorsqu’un savant crayon dessinait cet image,
 On dressait l’échafaud, et je pensois à vous.”

Lov’d objects, cease to wonder when ye trace
 The melancholy air that clouds my face ;
 Ah ! while the painter’s skill this image drew
 They rear’d the scaffold, and I thought of you !

La Voisier, the celebrated chemist, was put to death with the other farmers general. He requested a fortnight’s respite to enable him to complete a philosophical experiment. The Vandals had no time to pause in their career of blood, for the pursuits of philosophy ; and sent him away, observing that the republic had no longer any need of chemists. Chamfort, a member of the French academy, and an enthusiastic advocate for the revolution, with feelings too keen to bear the horrors by which so noble a cause had been stained, hid them from his sight

fight by a voluntary death. La Harpe was thrown into prison, and was destined to perish on the scaffold. The author of the Travels of the younger Anacharsis, notwithstanding his advanced age, was the object of continual persecution. Florian, who was himself imprisoned, and condemned to see his dearest friends perish had not sufficient fortitude to sustain such trials. His charming pen had displayed the most soothing images of happiness and virtue; and when he beheld around him only misery and crimes, his disordered imagination hastened his death. Vicq d'Azyr died of a broken heart. Bailly, the first mayor of Paris, whose astronomical researches have placed him in the highest rank of science, was murdered with circumstances of particular aggravation. He was to have been executed in the Champ de Mars; but, from the caprice of the sanguinary mob, he was compelled to wait two or three hours
at

at the place of execution, while the scaffold was removed to a field adjoining, where he stood drenched in rain, in the midst of winter, and, which was more difficult to bear than the “ pelting of the pitiless storm,” exposed to the insults and injuries of an execrable set of wretches who usually attended these horrid spectacles. The red flag was burned before his eyes, and he was compelled to set fire to the pile that consumed it, while the ruffians plunged his head into the smoke for their farther amusement. He submitted to all that was inflicted on him with the serenity of a philosopher, and only requested with mildness, that his sufferings might be terminated. One of the barbarians by whom he was tormented said to him in a tone of savage mockery, “ Tu trembles, Bailly.” “ Mon ami, c’est de froid*,”

* “ You tremble, Bailly.”—“ It is with cold, my friend.”

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replied

replied the sage. At length, after having made him drink the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, they permitted him to die.

LET-

LETTER IX.

ONE of the particular objects of Robespierre's rage was general Miranda, a native of Peru, well known in Europe by that philanthropic spirit of adventure which led him to pass many years in travelling through various parts of the globe, with the view of being useful to his own country ; which, since the period of the sanguinary Spanish conquests, has groaned beneath the yoke of the most abject slavery. If this philosophical enthusiast should not accomplish the purpose for which he undertook his crusade of patriotism, it has at least enabled him to furnish his mind with such acquisitions of knowledge, such stores of observation, and such a distinguished taste for the fine arts, as render his society in

the highest degree instructive and delightful; while with an understanding of the first order he unites that perfect simplicity of manners which usually belongs to great minds*.

When the Prussians were on their march towards Paris, Miranda accepted a command in the army of Dumourier, who was then retreating before them. After the defeat of the Prussians, and on the entrance of the republican army into the Low Countries, Miranda added to the high reputation he had already acquired through Europe, by the gallant

* Dumourier, in his Memoirs, while he does justice to Miranda's talents, complains of his "*haughtiness* and *hardness* of character." Miranda has certainly more of the sedate dignity of a Spaniard, than the brisk air of a Frenchman; and if that elevation of soul which scorns to make any composition with principles be *haughtiness*, and that inflexibility which steadfastly pursues the straight path of integrity and honour be *hardness of character*, Dumourier is in the right.

manner.

manner in which he executed that part of the conquest of those countries which was allotted him. When Dumourier came to Paris, the command of the whole army devolved on Miranda; and when the campaign began, and Dumourier was invading Holland, the attack of Maastricht, and the army on the Meuse, were committed to his care. The successful march of the Austrians on Aix-la-Chapelle obliged him to raise the siege; and he was joined soon after by Dumourier, who had left his conquest in Holland to repair the misfortunes of the army commanded by Valence. The ill humour which Dumourier had brought with him from Paris, where the Jacobins had already begun their system of misrule and anarchy, was not lessened by ill success; and, goaded by the pang of indignation and of disappointed ambition, he formed the criminal design of betraying the republic. This spirit of rebellion found

the most inflexible opposition from Miranda, whose personal friendship for Dumourier did not lead him to forget that his first duty was towards that country which had entrusted him with its defence. The event of the battle of Nerwinden, fought against the repeated advice of Miranda, and in which this general lost a considerable part of the troops he commanded, having been forced to sustain the whole shock of the enemy, afforded Dumourier the means of getting rid of an opponent so hostile to his designs; and Miranda was sent by the commissaries La Croix and Danton, without being previously heard by them, to give an account of his conduct at the bar of the convention. He underwent the most strict examination before the committees of war and general safety, who declared, that not the slightest doubt remained of his military conduct, or his fidelity to the republic. But this report was stifled by the

the intrigues of La Croix, Danton, and others of their party; and he was sent, in defiance of all decency, to the revolutionary tribunal.

His trial took place in the beginning of May, before justice had for ever fled from that sanguinary court. The hour of carnage was not yet arrived: the tribunal, though from its institution terrible, and cruel in its forms, which placed the life of the accused upon a casting voice, had not yet become a shrine consecrated to infernal deities, and reeking with the daily sacrifice of human victims. The voice of innocence was not yet stifled by the savage vociferations of monsters thirsting for its blood; and Miranda pleaded his cause with such sublime energy, as proved that his powers as an orator were not inferior to his talents as a general. He covered himself with glory, and his enemies with confusion; and, overstepping the usual forms, the

jury made their verdict the vehicle of eulogium upon his conduct.

After his trial he retired to a small distance from Paris, where he lived in literary leisure, amidst his books and paintings, and where I visited him frequently. His repose was however of short duration. He was too distinguished a character to escape the tyranny which the conspiracy of the 31st of May had established; and after having been persecuted by domiciliary visits on various pretences, he was again thrown into prison, charged with being the chief defender and abettor of the Gironde and Girondism. The real cause of Robespierre's animosity towards him is not well known, but may be resolved into that general hatred which he bore towards all men of talents; and as he knew that the eminent abilities of Miranda were improved by advantages which had fallen to the lot of few, he might naturally

rally think that the existence of such a man was dangerous to his own.

Twice, in the zenith of his tyranny, he accused Miranda to his subjects the Jacobins; and when we heard that the name of Miranda had issued from those pestilential lips, we considered his murder as inevitable. One obstacle was found sufficient to shield him from the tyrant's vengeance; and this was a feeling of shame which lurked in the mind of the public accuser, who, covered as he was with blood, did not dare to meet the look of Miranda, and bring forward a second accusation, after having once joined the general voice of applause upon his acquittal. This sentiment led Fouquier Tainville to put off the second trial required by Robespierre, till the tyrant would hear of delay and excuses no more; and himself inscribed Miranda's name on the fatal list for the twelfth of Thermidor. The revo-

lution of the tenth restored him to liberty.

Miranda submitted to an imprisonment of eighteen months, under the continual expectation of death, with that philosophical strength of mind which he possesses in a most eminent degree. He had indeed determined not to be dragged to the guillotine, and had therefore provided himself with poison. Thus armed, he sent for a considerable number of books from his library, and placed them in his little chamber, of which he found means to keep the sole possession. Here, he told me, he endeavoured to forget his present situation in the study of history and science. He tried to consider himself as a passenger on a long voyage, who had to fill up the vacuity of time with the researches of knowledge, and was alike prepared to perish or to reach the shore. During his long confinement, the only person with whom he

he associated was the former marquis Achille du Chatelet, who possessed all the accomplishments of literature, and whom the tyrants had dragged to prison while the wounds were yet unhealed which he had received in defending his country. He and Miranda used to meet every evening, take their tea together, and talk over the books they had read during the day, avoiding as much as possible the subject of politics, which affected them too deeply, nor could Du Chatelet bear to pronounce the names of the decemvirs. Tidings, however, of the horrible scenes which were passing in Paris reached him in the gloom of his prison; and the emotions of his mind, together with the irritation of his wound, produced a fever. Miranda attended him night and day alternately with another prisoner; and he was recovering from this disorder, when he heard that some of his dearest friends had perished

on the scaffold. The next morning, when Miranda went to his room to relieve a fellow-prisoner who had watched him during the night, he observed that his whole face was violently inflamed. He enquired eagerly what was the matter. Du Chatelet pressed his hand, and bade him farewell. This unfortunate young man, unable to support the shock occasioned by the murder of his friends, and grown weary of existence, resolved not to wait till the assassins called him to the scaffold, but had recourse to poison, with which he had provided himself. A physician had furnished Vergniaud, Du Chatelet, and several other martyrs to their country, with this lethean remedy, which they called * *la pillule de la liberté*. A note was found in Du Chatelet's chamber, in which he declared that he had sold his books, and all that belonged to him in the prison,

* The pill of liberty.

to Miranda. This was the only mode in which he could leave his effects to his friend, or prevent their being seized by the nation.

Miranda found a memorial among his papers, which he has put into my hands, where he traces the history of his political life. It contains an honourable list of the sacrifices he had made, the labours he had achieved, and the perils he had encountered in the public cause, from the period when in 1789 he contributed in the baillage of Perronne to the union of the nobles with the third estate, till the middle of the year 1793; when, although his wounds were not closed, he desired leave to return to the army, and obtained the command of the district of Aire. But he soon found that his infirmities did not permit him to fulfil the duties of his station:—he was obliged to return; and though his fortune was now lost, he refused to accept his pay as a
general

general officer, since he was no longer able to serve his country. At the very moment when he was preparing to return home, he was arrested by the revolutionary committee at Aire, as a measure of "*general safety*," and conducted with guards to the committee of general safety of the convention, who, with the same tender regard for public security, instead of declaring that this gallant young officer had merited well of his country, sent him to the prison of the Force, and refused to let his servant enter for a few minutes in the day to dress his wound. His prison six months after became his grave, and he was placed beyond the reach of tyranny. Miranda was then left to absolute solitude; but he had still the courage to live, and at length the hour of deliverance arrived.

You will perhaps think, dear sir, that the sketch which I have given you of public and private calamity is sufficiently gloomy.

gloomy. But, alas ! the scene blackens as we advance, and wears a deeper horror. We have now arrived at that period when the tyrant, grown bolder by success, intoxicated with power, and throwing aside all regard even to forms, reached the climax of his crimes, and accelerated the moment of his fall. You will view him and the agents of his iniquity no longer satisfied with victims in detail : they now murder in *mass*, and, in the words of Racine,

“ Lavent dans le sang leurs bras ensanglantés.”

I shall in the course of a fortnight send you a history of the last scenes of this foul tragedy, and give you such a detail, as can only be learnt on the spot, of the events which produced the revolution of the 9th of Thermidor, and of the incidents which on that memorable night determined the fate of the French republic.

In

In the mean time, you will not exclaim as the Roman poet did with respect to religion, "Of so many evils could Liberty have been the cause!" It is, alas! the condition of our uninstructed nature, that nations like individuals should acquire wisdom only in the school of experience; and though the page of history, which according to Lord Bolingbroke is "philosophy teaching by example," be open before us, we are too presumptuous, or too careless, to heed or apply the lesson. I need not make use of any reasoning to convince you that liberty is innocent of the outrages committed under its borrowed sanction; for though we might from some momentary impulse blaspheme its name, as Lucretius did that of religion, we must be persuaded that neither religion nor liberty is chargeable with the crimes committed by tyranny or superstition. As no weeds are more pernicious than those which arise in that soil from which good fruit

fruit alone should have sprung, so no crimes have exceeded those which the tyrant and the fanatic have committed in the name of Freedom, the guardian angel of the happiness of mankind, and in that of the Being "whose tender mercies are over all his works."

I must not conclude without informing you, that the dark picture which you have been contemplating is relieved by a bright and soothing perspective. The past seems like one of those frightful dreams which presents to the disturbed spirit phantoms of undescrivable horror, and "deeds without a name;" awakened from which, we hail with rapture the cheering beams of the morning, and anticipate the meridian lustre of the day. The 9th of Thermidor has established the republic; and nothing now remains but to arrange its forms. Its internal situation will no more offer a hideous contrast to its external victories. The guilty

ty commune of Paris exists no longer ; the den of the Jacobins is closed ; and the whole nation, roused into a sense of its danger by the terrible lesson it has been taught, can be oppressed no more. There scarcely exists a family, or an individual, in France, that has not been bereaved by tyranny of some dear relation, some chosen friend, who seems from the grave to call upon them with a warning voice to watch over the liberties of their country. The love of public virtue in the people of France is now blended with all the sympathies and affections of their natures : it is heard in the sighs of general mourning ; it speaks in the tears of the widow and the orphan ; and is not only imprinted by every argument that can render it sacred and durable on the understanding, but clings to every feeling of the heart.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

THE representatives of the French people undersigned, considering that, amidst events which excite the indignation of the whole republic, they cannot remain silent with respect to the attempts committed against the national representation, without feeling themselves chargeable with the most shameful pusillanimity, or with becoming still more guilty sharers in the crime :

Considering that the same conspirators, who, from the very period in which the republic was proclaimed, had never discontinued their attacks on the national representation, have at length filled up
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the measure of their crimes, in violating the majesty of the people in the persons of their representatives, by driving some to seek their safety in flight, by imprisoning others, and forcing the rest to bend their necks under the yoke of the most insulting tyranny :

Considering that the heads of this faction, emboldened by long impunity, growing strong through excess of impudence, and relying on the number of their accomplices, have seized on all the branches of the executive government, on the treasury, on the means of defence and the resources of the nation, which they dispose of at their pleasure, and which they are employing to effect its ruin :

Considering that they have at their command the chiefs of the military force, and the constituted authorities of Paris; that the majority of the inhabitants of this city, intimidated by the excesses of a faction which the law is unable

able to reach, affrighted by proscriptions with which they are continually threatened, find themselves not only incapable of destroying the machinations of the conspirators, but often, through respect to the law, which enjoins obedience to the constituted authorities, compelled even to become as it were accomplices in their crimes :

Considering that so great is the oppression under which the national convention labours, that not one of its decrees can be executed, unless it be approved or dictated by the heads of this faction ; that the conspirators have in fact set themselves up as the only organ of the public will, and that they have reduced the rest of the national representation to be the passive instruments of their pleasure :

Considering that the national convention, after having been forced to invest with unlimited powers those commissaries who have been sent into the departments
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and to the armies, and who have been chosen exclusively by this faction, has been unable to check the arbitrary acts which they have committed, or even to protest against the incendiary and disorganizing principles which the majority amongst them have propagated :

Considering that not only has the national convention been rendered incapable of prosecuting the despoilers of the public wealth, or the wretches who have given orders for murder and pillage; but even these same conspirators, after having failed in their designs on the night of the 10th and the 11th of March, have accomplished them with more success on the 20th, 21st, 27th, and 31st of May, and on the 2d of June last past :

Considering that at this last epocha they beat to arms, rung the tocsin, and fired the alarm guns; that the barriers of the city were shut, all communication cut off, the secrecy of letters violated, the
hall

hall of the convention blockaded by an armed force of more than 60,000 men ; that a formidable artillery was stationed at every avenue of the national palace ; that furnaces were fixed to serve the guns with red-hot balls, and that every preparation was made for an attack ; that the battalions enrolled for the Vendée, but detained for this purpose in the neighbourhood of Paris, were amongst the number of the besiegers ; that ruffians in the pay of the conspirators, and fitted for the execution of their bloody projects, occupied the most important posts and the passages of the hall ; that they were openly rewarded for their zeal by distributions of provisions and money ; that at the moment when the national convention presented itself in full assembly at the avenue of the national palace to enjoin the military to withdraw, the commander, invested by the conspirators with the most absolute dictatorship, had the

the audacity to insist that the proscribed deputies should be delivered up to the vengeance of the people ; and that on the refusal of the convention he had the impudence to call to arms, and put in danger the lives of the representatives of the French people :

Considering, finally, that it is by machinations such as these that they have forced from the convention, or rather from a sixth part of the members who compose it, a decree which pronounced the arbitrary seizure and deprived of their functions, without accusation, without evidence, in contempt of all forms, and through the most criminal violation of the rights of man and the national sovereignty, thirty-two representatives marked out and proscribed by the conspirators themselves :

They declare to their constituents, to the citizens of every department, and to the French people, whose rights and sovereignty

reignty have been thus shamefully violated, that from the moment in which the unity of the national representation has been broken by an act of violence, of which the history of nations has never yet furnished an example, they have neither been able nor have they thought it their duty to take any part in the deliberations of the assembly :

That driven by these unhappy circumstances to the impossibility of opposing by their individual exertions the slightest obstacle to the success of the conspirators, they can only proclaim to the whole republic the hateful scenes of which they have been both the witnesses and the victims.

Paris, the 6th of June,
2d year of the French republic.

Signed by seventy-three deputies.

No. II.

REPUBLICANS, you are acquainted with the dangers which threaten the public weal. They are so great that we must either take arms and die in the field of honour, or submit to the stroke of the assassin in our homes. We must save the republic, or perish with it: we must crouch to anarchy, or destroy it. We must resume our rank among the nations, or yield the precedence to the slave of the Asiatic despot, or the uncivilized Tartarian horde.

When the national representation, by losing its unity, becomes virtually dissolved; when the departments, whose deputies are shamefully arrested, consider themselves in reality as no longer represented; when the majesty of the people is violated by the attempts committed against its mandatories; when the faction which is longing for the return of royalty insolently

solently domineers over that corrupted city by which we are menaced, there is no longer any room for hesitation.

Shame and slavery, or let us fly to Paris! You waste the precious moments which are yet left to apply the remedy, in deliberating on the disease. Your country, your liberties, your honour as Frenchmen, yourselves, your wives, and children, are lost. Neither public nor private fortunes any longer exist: you lose four years of toil, of care, of labour, of watchings, of battles, and torrents of blood shed in defence of the most glorious of causes. These will be inevitably lost, and it is but a vile handful of factious traitors who are deciding on the liberty of twenty-five millions of men.

In this critical and desperate situation one general voice is heard from the centre to the confines of the republic. It proclaims that the nation is roused, to conquer or die. The nation is roused;

let us march ! Marfeilles calls on you ; Marfeilles which has unquestionably fo much right to your confidence, and fo deep a concern in the fupport of this revolution, of which ſhe has given fo noble an example. This appeal is the laſt uſe which ſhe wiſhes to make of the liberty of ſpeech in order to promulgate the great reſolutions ſhe has adopted, and the deciſive meaſures ſhe has taken. Far from a warlike people, far from a nation of foldiers, who wait only the ſignal for battle, be the vain tinfel of words ! To dare, and to act, is all we have to do.

Let us ſtrike ; and let Frenchmen, ſo long characteriſed as frivolous, ſhew the world, that if they deſerved the imputation while under the controul of kings, they have now reſumed their antient habits, and are become independent and formidable like the Gauls and the Franks, from whom they glory in being deſcended.

Re-

Republicans, who pant for liberty and detest licentiousness, who abhor royalty, and desire the establishment of the republic united and undivided, league yourselves with the Marseillois, who breathe the same vows already made by a considerable number of departments. They declare that the present political state of Paris is equivalent to a declaration of civil war against the whole republic.

They accuse, and present to you as guilty of all the disorders that afflict France, Philip d'Orleans and his faction: the frantic monster* whose venal howlings are his purchase, and whose name would sully this declaration; the den of the Jacobins of Paris; the seditious and factious men who are spreading themselves throughout the republic, and exciting it to commotion. Marseilles points them out as common enemies,

* Marat.

who have been wishing to lead us to the brink of the precipice, to adulterate their monstrous but measured system of anarchy with a king of their own creating : and this king would have been the most dishonoured being in existence ; a man overwhelmed with debt, rich in disgrace, debauchery, and baseness ; a man whom no virtuous citizen would admit among his servants, and who would be driven by themselves from their society ; a man, in short, who is imprisoned within our walls, and of whose speedy and severe punishment we are equally desirous.

We invite you to sign with us this just and indispensable covenant which we propose for the public safety, and to wipe off the stain of so many injuries.

Marseilles, therefore, declares, that it is in a legal state of resistance to oppression, and that it is authorised by the law to make war against the seditious :

2. That it can no longer acknowledge

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a convention whose unity is violated, to be the national representation ; and that at that period only, when the deputies of the people shall be fully and freely reinstated in their functions, the nation will obey its orders with confidence and submission :

3. That the throne of anarchy has been raised on the wrecks of the throne you have overturned, and that tyranny is detestable in proportion to the corruption of those who are prompted to exercise it :

4. That the conspirators have already proceeded to dissolve the national convention by reducing and disorganizing it, and exciting it to acts of folly, rashness, and disorder ; and that the French nation can consider those acts which are promulgated by a portion of its representatives who yet keep their seats, only as evidences of the tyranny exercised over

some by the perfidy and wickedness of others :

5. That the imprisonment of a great number of deputies of the convention is an attempt made in the delirium of guilt, an act which posterity will scarcely believe, if its authenticity were not proved by the record of the just vengeance we have sworn to take, and which you will aid us in inflicting :

6. That the good citizens who still inhabit Paris are invited to assist, as much as lies in their power, the united efforts which we are going to make for the public welfare, and to let the whole weight of the responsibility rest on the heads of the conspirators, which we declare are forfeited by their crimes :

7. That the domineering faction at Paris has compelled the departments to lead into that city, so long the prey and sport of ambitious men, the military force which is the last resource of the sovereign

vereign people; declaring at the same time that the united force under the direction of the departments, and in conformity to their wishes, is destined to extirpate those whose criminal hands have been employed in effecting the ruin of their country :

8. That every man capable of bearing arms is summoned, in the name of the law, in that of his own and the public interest, and in the name of humanity, to join his efforts in strengthening the dyke which we are opposing to this desolating torrent; that he may avoid being swept away into that abyss which the anarchists and infamous plunderers have opened before us :

9. That by decreeing a levy of a stated number of men ready to join in mass to destroy utterly every faction in its stronghold, the Marseillois, who are solicitous to finish a revolution which they began, and make the example which they have just

given an object of imitation, call upon every citizen to join them who is anxious to deserve well of mankind.

They have taken this preliminary step only in consideration of the urgency of the measures to be adopted, submitting them to the examination and the approbation of the whole sovereign body, without pretending to set bounds to the zeal of the generous defenders of their country, who shall voluntarily come forward to strengthen the phalanx of liberty. They hope that it will increase in its march, and that every citizen anxious for the public weal will bear a part :

10. That in the colours of this army the soldiers of the country shall read inscribed the accomplishment of every good law : “ The republic united and undivided, respect for persons and property ; ” words of consolation already graven on every heart :

11. That we appeal to God, and to
our

our arms, against the attempts that have been made on the unity of the national representation, against the violence which has been exercised on the personal liberty of our special deputies, against the conspiracies destructive of liberty, from which the superintendence of Providence has delivered us, of which Marseilles is pursuing the accomplices who undertook to execute the most horrible deeds within its walls. A popular tribunal, the guardian of established and well regulated order, is carrying on the prosecution of the conspirators, notwithstanding the obstacles with which it is surrounded. Invested with the confidence of the people, and by them supported, the most imperious law, that of circumstances, determines the activity of its operations ; and the people of Marseilles, far from deserving to be considered as disobedient to the law, in making use of the sword to punish the guilty, fulfil the first of social

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duties,

duties, which consists in the distribution of the most exemplary justice.

It is thus that the city of Marseilles, in addition to the motives arising from the general danger of the republic, joins the detail of the particular grievances which affect its tranquillity, and explains the necessity it is under of silencing its calumniators, who, in despair at not having succeeded in kindling the torch of discord among us, have dared to present it to the convention as the light of truth.

Republicans, the signal is given. The moments are precious, and the measures are decisive. Let us march, let the law enter with us into Paris ! and if you are unacquainted with the way, follow the traces of the blood of your brethren, which will lead you to the feet of its walls, from whence have issued forth those murderous scourges, those sanguinary conspiracies, and that consuming traffic of finance, the source of all our misery.

There

There you will give liberty to good citizens, dignity to the national convention, the ruffians will disappear, and the republic will be saved.

Taken into consideration in the general committee of the 32 sections of Marseilles, the 12th of June, 1793, the second year of the French republic.

Signed,

PELOUX, President.

CASTELLANET and } Secretaries.
PINATAL, }

Yesterday, the 16th, all the administrative bodies took the oath expressed in the manifesto.

No. III.

THE accusation against me is founded wholly on the supposition of my being an accomplice with men called conspirators. My friendship for a few of those persons is prior to the political circumstances which form the charge against them. The correspondence I held with them by an intermediate channel, at the time of their departure from Paris, is altogether foreign to state affairs. I have had in truth no political correspondence ; and in this respect I might absolutely deny the charge ; yet, although I cannot be called upon to give an account of my private affections, I may glory in them, as I do in the whole of my conduct, and I have nothing to conceal from the world.

I declare then, that I have received testimonies of regret on account of my imprisonment, and was informed that

Duperret

Duperret had two letters for me ; but whether written before or after my friends had left Paris, whether from one or two of them, I am altogether ignorant, since these letters have never reached me. At another time, I was earnestly conjured to escape from my prison, and received offers of assistance in the attempt, and to convey me to whatever place I should think proper. I was deterred from accepting these offers, from considerations both of duty and honour ; of duty, because I would not injure those to whose care I was committed ; of honour, since in all cases I should prefer exposing myself to the consequences of every possible vexation, rather than incur the appearances of guilt, by a flight unworthy of my character. I should not have been so careless with regard to my safety on the 31st of May, had I had an intention of effecting my escape at a later period. This is the extent of my connections

nections with my friends who fled. Undoubtedly if the communication had not been interrupted between us, or if I had not been restrained by my imprisonment, I should have endeavoured to procure information concerning them, for I knew of no law that forbids it. Alas! in what age, or amongst what people were those sentiments of esteem and fidelity which bind men to each other, ever accounted a crime? I do not pretend to decide upon the measures taken by those who were proscribed: but I never will believe that those men have intended ill, whose integrity, patriotism, and generous devotion to their country I have seen so clearly displayed. If they have erred, their errors are those of virtue; they are overcome without being degraded; they are unfortunate in my eyes, without being guilty. If I am criminal in offering vows for their safety, I declare myself so to the whole world. I am under

no concern for their glory, and I willingly share in the honour of being oppressed by their enemies. I have known these generous men who are accused of having conspired against their country. They were firm but humane republicans; they were persuaded that good laws were necessary to make the republic beloved by those who had no confidence in its stability: but this was indeed a more difficult task than to murder them. The history of all ages has proved that great talents are necessary to lead men to virtue by good laws, while violence alone has been sufficient to restrain them by terror, or annihilate them by death. I have heard my friends maintain that plenty, like happiness, could only result from an equitable government; that the omnipotence of bayonets might produce fear, but not bread. I have seen them animated by the warmest enthusiasm for the happiness of the people, disdaining to flatter

flatter them, determined to fall rather the victims of their blindness, than deceive them. I own that these principles and this conduct have appeared to me altogether different from those of tyrants and ambitious men, who amuse the people only to enslave them. It is for these reasons that I am filled with esteem for these generous men. This error, if it be one, will go with me to the grave, and I shall glory in following those whom I could not accompany thither.

My defence, I may venture to assert, is more necessary to those who are desirous of being informed, than it is to myself. Conscious of having fulfilled my duties, I look to the future with security and confidence. My taste for study and my habits of retirement have kept me at a distance both from the follies of dissipation, and from the bustle of intrigue. Enamoured of liberty, the value of which I learnt from reflection,

I viewed

I viewed the revolution with transport, persuaded that it was the epocha of the subversion of despotism, which I detest; of the reformation of abuses, under which I had often sighed, while the fate of the unhappy and oppressed hung upon my heart. I have followed the progress of the revolution with solicitude. I have expressed myself on the subject with warmth; but I have never overpassed the limits prescribed me by my sex. Some talents perhaps, a little philosophy, a greater degree of courage, and which in times of danger did not weaken that of my husband, are probably what those who knew me have imprudently ascribed to me, and which may have contributed to make me enemies amongst those by whom I was not known. Roland sometimes employed me as his secretary; and the celebrated letter to the king, for instance, was copied wholly by me. This would be a good paper enough to frame part

of my indictment, if the Austrians were my prosecutors, and thought proper to extend the responsibility of the minister to his wife. But Roland had long since displayed his sentiments, and his love of great principles. The evidence of this exists in the numerous books which he has published during these fifteen years past. His knowledge and his integrity are eminently his own; and he had no need of a wife to become a wife and faithful minister. Neither conferences nor cabals have ever been held at his house. His friends, his colleagues, whoever they were, and his acquaintances met at his table once a week, where in very public conversation they discoursed openly on those topics in which every one was interested. On the whole, the writings of this minister breathe throughout the love of order and peace, explaining in the most affecting manner the best principles of morality and policy. They
will

will for ever bear witness to his wisdom, as the accounts he has given in bear witness to his integrity.

I return to the crime imputed to me. I observe that I had no intimate acquaintance with Duperret. I had sometimes seen him, while my husband was minister, but he had not visited me during the six months that have elapsed since Roland quitted the administration : and I might make the same remark respecting the other deputies who were our friends ; which certainly does not tally with the accusation of conspiracy and secret understanding imputed to us. It is clear from my first letter to Duperret, that I wrote to this deputy, only because I found it difficult to write to any other, with the idea that he would be inclined to render me service. My correspondence with him, therefore, was not a thing projected ; it was not the sequel of any preceding connections ; and it had no political

political view. It furnished me with an opportunity of receiving intelligence of those who were absent, and with whom I was in habits of friendship, altogether independent of political considerations. Such considerations formed no part of the correspondence which I held with them in the first moments of their absence. No memorial to this effect is brought in evidence against me. Those which are produced, only intimate that I share in the opinions of those who are called conspirators. This induction is founded, I own it to the world, and I glory in this conformity of sentiment; but I have never published these sentiments in any manner that can be imputed to me as a crime. In order to establish the being an accomplice in any project, it must be proved that advice has been given, and means furnished. I have done neither; I am therefore not guilty in the eyes of the law; there is

none

none which can condemn me; there exists no fact for the application of any.

I know that, in revolutions, law as well as justice is often forgotten; and the evidence of this is, that I am at this bar. I am indebted for this prosecution only to those prejudices and that violent hatred which burst forth amidst great convulsions, and which, in general, fix upon those who are placed in conspicuous situations, or who are known to possess energy of character. It would have been easy for me to have avoided this trial, which I foresaw; but I thought it more becoming to meet it: I thought that I owed this example to my country: I thought that, if I should be condemned, I should leave to my tyrants the odium of sacrificing a woman who had no other crime than perhaps some talents of which she seldom availed herself, great zeal for the interests of mankind, courage to adhere to her unfortunate friends, and to
render

render homage to truth at the hazard of her life. Those who have true greatness of soul throw away selfish feelings, remember that they belong only to the species, and look to futurity for their reward. I belong to the virtuous and persecuted Roland. I was in habits of friendship with men whom ignorance and the jealous hatred of low, vulgar minds have proscribed, and murdered. I am to perish also, because it is consistent with the principles of tyranny to sacrifice those whom it has cruelly oppressed, and annihilate even every witness of its crimes. Under both these titles you ought to condemn me to die, and I await my sentence. When innocence mounts the scaffold to which it is condemned by error or wickedness, it reaches the goal of triumph. May I be the last victim that shall be sacrificed ! I shall leave with joy this unhappy land, which is destroying the good, and drinking in the blood of the

the just. O truth, my country, friendship, sacred objects, sentiments dear to my heart, receive my last offering! My life was devoted to you, and ye alone spread a softness and grace over my last moments! God of heaven! enlighten this unhappy people, for whose liberty I breathe my warmest vows.—Liberty!—to those great souls it eminently belongs who despise death, and who can meet it with courage: but it was not formed for weak minds, who compound with crime, while they conceal their self-love and their cowardice under the name of prudence. It was not formed for those profligate men, who, rising from their beds of debauchery, or creeping forth from a sink of wretchedness, run and bathe themselves in the blood that streams from the scaffolds. But it is the guardian of a wise and humane people who practise justice, despise flatterers, know their true friends, and revere truth. As long as

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you

you shall not form such a people, O my fellow-citizens ! you will talk in vain of liberty ; you will live only in a state of licentiousness, of which each of you will fall the victim in your turn ; you will ask for bread, but you will find only mangled carcases, and you will end in being slaves.

I have concealed neither my sentiments, or opinions. I know that a Roman lady was sent to execution under Tiberius, for having lamented her son. I know that in times of blindness and party-spirit, whoever dares to avow himself the friend of condemned or proscribed men, exposes himself to share their fate : but I despise death. I have never feared any thing but guilt ; and I would not purchase my life at the price of meanness.

Unhappy times, unhappy people, when the obligation of rendering justice to injured virtue is beset with danger ; but too happy are those who have cou-

rage to brave it.—It is now for you to examine if it be compatible with your interests to condemn in defect of evidence, for simple opinions only, and without the support of any law.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

